

THE
THEATRE:
OR,
SELECT WORKS
OF THE
British Dramatic Poets.

IN TWELVE VOLUMES.

To which are prefixed;

The LIVES of these celebrated WRITERS,

AND

STRICTURES on Most of the PLAYS.

VOLUME the THIRD.

CONTAINING

HAMLET, PRINCE OF DENMARK. A TRAGEDY.
TANCRED AND SIGISMUNDA. A TRAGEDY.
THE PROVOK'D HUSBAND. A COMEDY.
THE MISER. A COMEDY.

EDINBURGH:

Printed by and for MARTIN & WOTHERSPOON.

M. DCC. LXVIII.

THE
SELECTED WORKS
OF THE
BRITISH DRAMATIC POETS

IN TWELVE VOLUMES.

The list of plays ascribed to each writer.

STATIONERS OR MESS OF THE PRESS.

VOLUME THE THIRD.

CONTAINING
HAMILTON, TRAGEDY IN FIVE ACTS, A TRAGEDY
AND A TRAGEDY
THE PROOF OF THE MESS
THE MESS, A COMEDY



EDINBURGH
Printed by James Ballantyne, at the Edinburgh Press, No. 10, St. Andrew's Street.
1825.

H A M L E T,

PRINCE OF DENMARK.

HAMLET, Son to the former, and nephew to the present King.

POLONIUS, Lord Chamberlain.

HORATIO, Friend to Hamlet. A

LAERTIUS, Son to Polonius.

VOLEMAN.

TRAGEDY.

OSTER, a boy.

MARCELLUS, an officer.

BERNARDO, } two soldiers.

FRAZELLIO, }

B. Y.

REYNOLDS, Captain of the Guard.

Chief of Hamlet's Guard.

WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE.

Author of the Tragedy of Hamlet, Prince of Denmark.

Edited by the Editor.

Printed by and for MARTIN & WOTHERSPOON.

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M. DEC. LEVIE.

H A M L E T,

PRINCE OF DENMARK.

A

TRAGEDY.

B Y

WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE.



EDINBURGH:

Printed by and for MARRIS & WOODHEAD.

M. DCC. LXXXV.

Dramatis Personæ.

CLAUDIUS, King of Denmark.

FORTINBRAS, Prince of Norway.

HAMLET, son to the former, and nephew to the present King.

POLONIUS, Lord Chamberlain.

HORATIO, friend to Hamlet.

LAERTES, son to Polonius.

VOLTIMAND,

CORNELIUS,

ROSINCRAUNTZ,

GUILDENSTERN,

OSRICK, a fop.

MARCELLUS, an officer.

BERNARDO,

FRANCISCO,

REYNOLDO, servant to Polonius.

Ghost of Hamlet's father.

GERTRUDE, Queen of Denmark, and mother to Hamlet.

OPHELIA, daughter to Polonius, beloved by Hamlet.

Ladies attending on the Queen.

Players, grave-makers, sailors, messengers, and other attendants.

SCENE, ELSINORE

Dramatis Personae.

CLAUDIUS, King of Denmark.
 PORTUNUS, Friend of Norway.
 HAMLET, son to the former, and nephew to the present King.
 POLONIUS, Lord Chamberlain.
 HORATIO, friend to Hamlet.
 LAERTES, son to Polonius.
 VOLTAMAND,
 CORNELIUS,
 BERNARDINI,
 GILBERTSON,
 OSICK, a Jop.
 MARCELUS, an officer.
 BERNARD,
 FRANKLIN,
 RETNOLD, servant to Polonius.
 GHOST of Hamlet's father.
 GERTRUDE, Queen of Denmark, and mother to Hamlet.
 OPHELIA, daughter to Polonius, beloved by Hamlet.
 Ladies attending on the Queen.
 Trapp, grave-diggers, sailors, messengers, and other attendants.



SCENE

H A M L E T.

A C T I S C E N E I.

A Platform before the palace.

Enter BERNARDO and FRANCISCO, two centinels.

BARNARDO.

W H O's there?

Fran. Nay, answer me : stand, and unfold yourself.

Ber. Long live the King!

Fran. Bernardo?

Ber. He.

Fran. You come most carefully upon your hour.

Ber. 'Tis now struck twelve; get thee to bed, Francisco.

Fran. For this relief, much thanks : 'tis bitter cold, And I am sick at heart.

Ber. Have you had a quiet guard?

Fran. Not a mouse stirring.

Ber. Well, good night.

If you do meet Horatio and Marcellus, The rivals of my watch, bid them make haste.

Enter HORATIO and MARCELLUS.

Fran. I think I hear them. Stand, ho! who's there?

Hor. Friends to this ground.



H A M L E T, A&M.

Mar. And liege-men to the Dane.

Fran. Give you good night.

Mar. Oh, farewell, honest soldier; who hath reliev'd
you?

Fran. Bernardo has my place: give you good night.
[Exit Francisco.]

Mar. Holla! Bernardo——

Ber. Say, what, is Horatio there?

Hor. A piece of him. [Going his hand.]

Ber. Welcome, Horatio; welcome, good Marcellus.

Mar. What, has this thing appear'd again to-night?

Ber. I have seen nothing.

Mar. Horatio says, 'tis but our phantasy;
And will not let belief take hold of him,
Touching this dreaded sight, twice seen of us;
Therefore I have entreated him along
With us, to watch the minutes of this night;
That if again this apparition come,
He may approve our eyes, and speak to it.

Hor. Tush, tush! 'twill not appear.

Ber. Sit down a while,
And let us once again assail your ears,
That are so fortified against our story,
What we have two nights seen.

Hor. Well, sit we down,
And let us hear Bernardo speak of this.

Ber. Last night of all,
When yon same star that's westward from the pole,
Had made his course t' illumine that part of heav'n
Where now it burns, Marcellus and myself,

The bell then beating one——

Mar. Peace, break thee off.

Enter the Ghost.

Look where it comes again.

Ber. In the same figure like the King that's dead.

Mar. Thou art a scholar; speak to it, Horatio.

Ber. Looks it not like the King? mark it, Horatio.

Hor. Most like: it harrows me with fear and wonder.



ACT I. PRINCE of DENMARK.

Ber. It would be spoke to.

Mar. Speak to it, Horatio.

Hor. What art thou that usurp'st this time of night,
Together with that fair and warlike form

In which the Majesty of buried Denmark
Did sometime march? By Heav'n, I charge thee, speak.

Mar. It is offended.

Ber. See! it stalks away.

Hor. Stay; speak; I charge thee, speak.

[Exit Ghost.]

Mar. 'Tis gone; and will not answer.

Ber. How now, Horatio? you tremble and look pale;
Is not this something more than phantasy?

What think you of it?

Hor. Before my God I might not this believe,
Without the sensible and try'd avouch

Of mine own eyes.

Mar. Is it not like the King?

Hor. As thou art to thyself.
Such was the very armour he had on,
When he th' ambitious Norway combated;
So frown'd he once, when in an angry parle
He smote the fleeced Polack on the ice.
'Tis strange——

Mar. Thus twice before, and just at this dead hour,
With martial stalk, he hath gone by our watch.

Hor. In what particular thought to work, I know
not;

But, in the gross and scope of my opinion,
This bodes some strange eruption to our state.

Mar. Good now, sit down, and tell me he that knows,
Why this same strict and most observant watch

So nightly toils the subjects of the land?

And why such daily cast of brazen cannon,

And foreign mart for implements of war?

Why such impress of shipwrights, whose sore task

Does not divide the Sunday from the week?

What might me toward, that this sweaty haste

Doth make the night joint labourer with the day?

Who is't that can inform me?

Hor. That can I;

At least, the whisper goes so. Our last King,

Whose image but even now appear'd to us,

Was, as you know, by Fortinbras of Norway,

(Thereto prick'd on by a most emulate pride),

Dar'd to the fight: in which our vallant Hamlet

(For so this side of our known world esteem'd him)

Did slay this Fortinbras; who, by seal'd compact,

Well ratified by law of heraldry,

Did forfeit (with his life) all those his lands

Which he stood seiz'd of, to the conqueror:

Against the which a moiety competent

Was 'gaged by our King; which had return'd

To the inheritance of Fortinbras,

Had he been vanquisher; as by the same comart,

And carriage of the articles design'd,

His fell to Hamlet. Now young Fortinbras,

Of unimproved mettle hot and full,

Hath in the skirts of Norway here and there

Shark'd up a list of landless resolute,

For food and diet, to some enterprise

That hath a stomach in't: which is no other,

As it doth well appear unto our state,

But to recover of us by strong hand,

And terms compulsory, those foresaid lands

So by his father lost. And this, I take it,

Is the main motive of our preparations,

The source of this our watch, and the chief head

Of this post-haste and romage in the land.

Ber. I think it be no other, but even so.

Well may it sort, that this portentous figure

Comes armed through our watch so like the King,

That was, and is the question of these wars.

Hor. A mote it is to trouble the mind's eye.

In the most high and palmy state of Rome,

A little ere the mightiest Julius fell,

The graves stood tenantless; the sheeted dead

Did squeak and gibber in the Roman streets;

ALL PRINCE of DENMARK. 11

Stars shone with trains of fire, dews of blood fell;
Disasters veil'd the sun; and the moist star,
Upon whose influence Neptune's empire stands,
Was sick almost to doomsday with eclipse.
And even the like precourse of fierce events,
As harbingers preceding still the fates,
And prologue to the omen coming on,
Have heav'n and earth together demonstrated
Unto our climatures and countrymen.

Enter GHOST again.

But soft, behold! lo, where it comes again!
I'll cross it though it blast me. Stay, illusion!

[Spreading his arms.]

If thou hast any sound, or use of voice,
Speak to me.

If there be any good thing to be done,
That may to thee do ease, and grace to me;
Speak to me.

If thou art privy to thy country's fate,
Which, happily foreknowing may avoid,
Oh speak!—

Or if thou hast uphoarded, in thy life,
Extorted treasure, in the womb of earth, *[Cock crows.]*
For which, they say, you spirits oft walk in death,
Speak of it. Stay, and speak—Stop it, Marcellus.—

Mar. Shall I strike at it with my parian?

Hor. Do, if it will not stand.

Ber. 'Tis here—

Hor. 'Tis here—

Mar. 'Tis gone.

[Exit Ghost.]

We do it wrong, being so majestic,
To offer it the shew of violence;
For it is as the air, invulnerable;
And our vain blows, malicious mockery.

Ber. It was about to speak when the cock crew.

Hor. And then it started like a guilty thing
Upon a fearful summons. I have heard,
The cock, that is the trumpet to the morn,

Doth with his lofty and shrill-sounding throat
 Awake the god of day; and at his warning,
 Whether in sea or fire, in earth or air,
 The extravagant and erring spirit hies
 To his confine: and of the truth herein
 This present object made probation.

Mar. It faded on the crowing of the cock.
 Some say, that ever 'gainst that season comes
 Wherein our Saviour's birth is celebrated,
 The bird of dawning singeth all night long;
 And then they say no spirit walks abroad;
 The nights are wholesome, then no planet strikes,
 No fairy takes, no witch hath power to charm;
 So hallow'd and so gracious is the time.

Hor. So have I heard, and do in part believe it.
 But look, the morn, in russet mantle clad,
 Walks o'er the dew of yon high eastward hill.
 Break we our watch up; and, by my advice,
 Let us impart what we have seen to-night
 Unto young Hamlet. For, upon my life,
 This spirit, dumb to us, will speak to him.
 Do you consent, we shall acquaint him with it,
 As needful in our loves, fitting our duty.

Mar. Let's do't, I pray; and I this morning know
 Where we shall find him most conveniently. [*Exeunt.*]

S C E N E II

Changes to the Palace.

Enter CLAUDIUS *King of Denmark, GERTRUDE the Queen, HAMLET, POLONIUS, LAERTES, VOLTIMAND, CORNELIUS, Lords and Attendants.*

King. Though yet of Hamlet our dear brother's death
 The memory be green, and that it fitted
 To bear our hearts in grief, and our whole kingdom
 To be contracted in one brow of woe;
 Yet so far hath Discretion fought with Nature,

ACT I. PRINCE of DENMARK. 13

That we with wisest sorrow think on him,
 Together with remembrance of ourselves.
 Therefore our sometime sister, now our Queen,
 Th' imperial jointress of this warlike state,
 Have we, as 'twere, with a defeated joy,
 With one auspicious, and one dropping eye,
 With mirth in funeral, and with dirge in marriage,
 In equal scale weighing delight and dole,
 Taken to wife. — Nor have we herein barr'd
 Your better wisdoms, which have freely gone
 With this affair along : (for all, our thanks) :
 Now follows, that you know, young Fortinbras,
 Holding a weak supposal of our worth ;
 Or thinking, by our late dear brother's death,
 Our state to be disjoint, and out of frame ;
 Colleagu'd with this dream of his advantage,
 He hath not fail'd to pester us with message,
 Importing the surrender of these lands
 Lost by his father, by all bands of law,
 To our most valiant brother. — So much for him.
 Now for ourself, and for this time of meeting :
 This much the business is. We have here writ
 To Norway, uncle of young Fortinbras,
 (Who, impotent, and bed-rid, scarcely hears
 Of this his nephew's purpose), to suppress
 His further gait herein ; in that the levies,
 The lists, and full proportions are all made
 Out of his subjects : and we here dispatch
 You, good Cornelius, and you, Voltimand,
 For bearers of this greeting to old Norway ;
 Giving to you no further personal power
 To business with the King, more than the scope
 Which these dilated articles allow.
 Farewell, and let your haste commend your duty.
Vol. In that, and all things will we shew our duty.
King. We doubt it nothing ; heartily farewell.
 [Exeunt Vol. and Corn.]
 And now, Laertes, what's the news with you ?
 You told us of some suit. What is't, Laertes ?

You cannot speak of reason to the Dane,
And lose your voice. What wouldst thou beg, Laertes,
That shall not be my offer, not thy asking?
The blood is not more native to the heart,
The hand more instrumental to the mouth,
Than to the throne of Denmark is thy father.
What wouldst thou have, Laertes?

Laer. My dread Lord,
Your leave and favour to return to France;
From whence, though willingly, I came to Denmark
To shew my duty in your coronation;
Yet now I must confess, that duty done,
My thoughts and wishes bend again toward France,
And bow them to your gracious leave and pardon.

King. Have you your father's leave? what says Polonius?

Pol. He hath, my Lord, by labour some petition,
Wrung from me my slow leave; and, at the last,
Upon his will I seal'd my hard consent.
I do beseech you, give him leave to go.

King. Take thy fair hour, Laertes, time be thine;
And thy best graces spend it at thy will.
But now, my Cousin Hamlet.—Kind my son—

Ham. A little more than kin, and less than kind.

Aside.

King. How is it that the cloud still hangs on you?

Ham. Not so, my Lord, I am too much i' the sun.

Queen. Good Hamlet, cast thy nighted colour off,
And let thine eye look like a friend on Denmark.
Do not for ever, with thy veiled lids,
Seek for thy noble father in the dust:
Thou know'st 'tis common; all that live must die;
Passing through nature to eternity.

Ham. Ay, Madam, it is common.

Queen. If it be, /
Why seems it so particular with thee?

Ham. Seems, Madam? nay, it is; I know not, seems:
'Tis not alone my inky cloak, good mother,
Nor customary suits of solemn black,

Nor windy suspiration of forc'd breath,
 No, nor the fruitful river in the eye,
 Nor the dejected 'haviour of the visage,
 Together with all forms, moods, shews of grief,
 That can denote me truly. These indeed seem,
 For they are actions that a man might play;
 But I have that within which passeth shew;
 These but the trappings and the suits of woe.

King. 'Tis sweet and commendable in your nature,

Hamlet,

To give these mourning duties to your father;
 But you must know, your father lost a father;
 That father, his; and the survivor bound
 In filial obligation, for some term,
 To do obsequious sorrow: but to persevere
 In obstinate condolment, is a course
 Of impious stubbornness; unmanly grief;
 It shews a will most incorrect to Heav'n,
 A heart unfortified, a mind impatient,
 An understanding simple, and unschool'd:
 For what we know must be, and is as common
 As any the most vulgar thing to sense,
 Why should we, in our peevish opposition,
 Take it to heart? By! 'Tis a fault to Heav'n,
 A fault against the dead, a fault to Nature,
 To Reason most absurd; whose common theme
 Is death of fathers, and who still hath cry'd
 From the first corse, till he that died to-day,
 This must be so. We pray you throw to earth
 This unprevailing woe, and think of us
 As of a father: for let the world take note,
 You are the most immediate to our throne;
 And with no less nobility of love,
 Than that which dearest father bears his son,
 Do I impart to you. For your intent
 In going back to school to Wittenberg,
 It is most retrograde to our desire:
 And we beseech you, bend you to remain
 Here in the cheer and comfort of our eye,

Our chiefest courtier, cousin, and our son.

Queen. Let not thy mother lose her prayers, Hamlet:
I pr'ythee stay with us, go not to Wittenberg.

Ham. I shall in all my best obey you, Madam.

King. Why, 'tis a loving and a fair reply;
Be as ourself in Denmark. Madam, come;
This gentle and unforc'd accord of Hamlet
Sits smiling to my heart; in grace whereof,
No jocund health that Denmark drinks to-day,
But the great cannon to the clouds shall tell;
And the King's rouse the heav'n shall bruit again;
Respeaking earthly thunder. Come, away. [*Exeunt.*]

S C E N E I I.

Manet HAMLET.

Ham. O that this too too solid flesh would melt,
Thaw, and resolve itself into a dew!
Or that the Everlasting had not fix'd
His cannon 'gainst self-slaughter! Oh God! oh God!
How weary, stale, flat, and unprofitable,
Seem to me all the uses of this world!
Fy on't! oh fy! 'tis an unweeded garden,
That grows to seed; things rank, and gross in nature,
Possess it merely. That it should come to this!
But two months dead! nay, not so much; not two;
—So excellent a King, that was to this
Hyperion to a satyr: so loving to my mother,
That he permitted not the winds of heav'n
Visit her face too roughly. Heav'n and earth!
Must I remember—why, she would hang on him,
As if increase of appetite had grown
By what it fed on: yet, within a month—
Let me not think—Frailty, thy name is *Woman*!
A little month! or e'er those shoes were old
With which she follow'd my poor father's body,
Like Niobe, all tears—Why, she, ev'n she—
(O Heav'n! a beast, that wants discourse of reason,
Would have mourn'd longer)—married with mine
uncle,

My father's brother; but no more like my father
Than I to Hercules. Within a month—
Ere yet the salt of most unrighteous tears
Had left the flushing in her gauled eyes,
She married.—Oh, most wicked speed, to post
With such dexterity to incestuous sheets!
It is not, nor it cannot come to good,
But break, my heart, for I must hold my tongue.

S C E N E IV.

Enter HORATIO, BERNARDO, and MARCELLUS.

Hor. Hail to your Lordship!

Ham. I am glad to see you well:

Horatio;—or I do forget myself.

Hor. The same, my Lord, and your poor servant ever.

Ham. Sir, my good friend; I'll change that name
with you.

And what make you from Wittenberg, *Horatio*?

Marcellus!

Mar. My good Lord——

Ham. I am very glad to see you; good morning, Sir.
But what, in faith, make you from Wittenberg?

Hor. A truant disposition, good my Lord.

Ham. I would not hear your enemy say so;
Nor shall you do mine ear that violence,
To make it trustful of your own report
Against yourself. I know you are no truant;
But what is your affair in Elsinore?
We'll teach you to drink deep ere you depart.

Hor. My Lord, I came to see your father's funeral.

Ham. I pr'ythee, do not mock me, fellow-student;
I think it was to see my mother's wedding.

Hor. Indeed, my Lord, it follow'd hard upon.

Ham. Thrift, thrift, *Horatio*; the funeral baw'd meats
Did coldly furnish forth the marriage-tables.
'Would I had met my dearest foe in heav'n,
Or ever I had seen that day, *Horatio*!
My father——methinks I see my father.

Hor. Oh, where, my Lord?

Ham. In my mind's eye, Horatio.

Hor. I saw him once; he was a goodly king.

Ham. He was a man, take him for all in all,

I shall not look upon his like again.

Hor. My Lord, I think I saw him yesternight.

Ham. Saw! who?

Hor. My Lord, the King your father.

Ham. The King my father!

Hor. Season your admiration but a while,

With an attentive ear; till I deliver,

Upon the witness of these gentlemen,

This marvel to you.

Ham. For Heaven's love, let me hear.

Hor. Two nights together had these gentlemen,
 Marcellus and Bernardo, on their watch,
 In the dead waste and middle of the night,
 Been thus encountred: a figure like your father,
 Arm'd at all points exactly, *cap-a-pie*,
 Appears before them, and with solemn march
 Goes slow and stately by them; thrice he walk'd,
 By their oppress'd and fear-surprised eyes,
 Within his truncheon's length; whilst they (distill'd
 Almost to jelly with th' effect of fear)
 Stand dumb, and speak not to him. This to me
 In dreadful secrecy impart they did,
 And I with them the third night kept the watch;
 Where, as they had deliver'd both in time,
 Form of the thing, each word made true and good,
 The apparition comes. I knew your father:
 These hands are not more like.

Ham. But where was this?

Hor. My Lord, upon the platform where we watch'd.

Ham. Did you not speak to it?

Hor. My Lord, I did;

But answer made it none. Yet once methought
 It lifted up its head, and did address
 Itself to motion, like as it would speak:
 But even then the morning cock crew loud;

ACT. PRINCE of DENMARK.

79

And at the sound it shrunk in haste away,
And vanish'd from our sight.

Ham. 'Tis very strange.

Hor. As I do live, my honour'd Lord, 'tis true;
And we did think it writ down in our duty
To let you know of it.

Ham. Indeed, indeed, Sirs, but this troubles me.
Hold you the watch to-night?

Both. We do, my Lord.

Ham. Arm'd, say you?

Both. Arm'd, my Lord.

Ham. From top to toe?

Both. My Lord, from head to foot.

Ham. Then saw you not his face?

Hor. Oh, yes, my Lord; he wore his beaver up.

Ham. What look'd he frowningly?

Hor. A count'nance more in sorrow than in anger.

Ham. Pale, or red?

Hor. Nay, very pale.

Ham. And fix'd his eyes upon you?

Hor. Most constantly.

Ham. I would I had been there!

Hor. It would have much amaz'd you.

Ham. Very like. Staid it long?

Hor. While one, with moderate haste, might tell a
hundred.

Both. Longer, longer.

Hor. Not when I saw't.

Ham. His beard was grissled? no.

Hor. It was, as I have seen it in his life,
A sable silver'd.

Ham. I'll watch to-night; perchance 'twill walk
again.

Hor. I warrant you, it will.

Ham. If it assume my noble father's person,
I'll speak to it, though hell itself should gape,
And bid me hold my peace. I pray you all,
If you have hitherto conceal'd this sight,
Let it be ten'ble in your silence still;

And whatsoever shall befall to-night;
Give it an understanding, but no tongue.
I will requite your loves: so fare ye well.
Upon the platform 'twixt eleven and twelve
I'll visit you.

All. Our duty to your Honour. *[Exeunt.]*

Ham. Your loves, as mine to you, farewell.
My father's spirit in arms! all is not well.
I doubt some foul play: 'would the night were come!
Till then, sit down, my soul: foul deeds will rise
(Tho' all the earth o'erwhelm them) to men's eyes.

[Exit.]

SCENE V.

Changes to an Apartment in Polonius's house.

Enter LAERTES and OPHELIA.

Laer. My necessities are embark'd, farewell;
And, sister, as the winds give benefit,
And convoy is assistance, do not sleep,
But let me hear from you.

Oph. Do you doubt that?

Laer. For Hamlet, and the trifling of his favour,
Hold it a fashion, and a toy in blood;
A violet in the youth of primy nature;
Forward, not permanent; tho' sweet, not lasting;
The perfume, and suppliance of a minute;
No more——

Oph. No more but so?

Laer. Think it no more:
For Nature, crescent, does not grow alone
In thews and bulk; but, as this temple waxes,
The inward service of the mind and soul
Grows wide withal. Perhaps he loves you now;
And now no soil of cautel doth besmerch
The virtue of his will: but you must fear
His greatness weigh'd, his will is not his own;

For he himself is subject to his birth.
 He may not, as unvalued persons do,
 Carve for himself; for on his choice depends
 The safety and the health of the whole state;
 And therefore must his choice be circumscrib'd
 Unto the voice and yielding of that body
 Whereof he's head. Then, if he says he loves you,
 It fits your wisdom so far to believe it,
 As he in his peculiar act and place
 May give his saying deed; which is no further,
 Than the main voice of Denmark goes withal.
 Then weigh what loss your honour may sustain,
 If with too credent ear you list his songs;
 Or lose your heart; or your chaste treasure open
 To his unmaster'd importunity.
 Fear it. Ophelia, fear it, my dear sister;
 And keep within the rear of your affection,
 Out of the shot and danger of desire.
 The chariest maid is prodigal enough,
 If she unmask her beauty to the moon.
 Virtue itself scapes not calumnious strokes;
 The canker galls the infant of the spring,
 Too oft before their buttons be disclos'd;
 And in the morn and liquid dew of youth
 Contagious blightsments are most eminent.
 Be wary then, best safety lies in fear;
 Youth to itself rebels, though none else near.

Oph. I shall th' effects of this good lesson keep,
 As watchmen to my heart. But, good my brother,
 Do not, as some ungracious pastors do,
 Shew me the steep and thorny way to heav'n;
 Whilst he, a puffed and reckless libertine,
 Himself the primrose path of dalliance treads,
 And recks not his own read.

Laer. Oh, fear me not.

SCENE VI.

Enter POLONIUS.

I stay too long; — but here my father comes.

A double blessing is a double grace;

Occasion smiles upon a second leave.

Pol. Yet here, Laertes! abroad, abroad for shame;
The wind sits in the shoulder of your sail,
And you are staid for. There, my blessing with you;

[Laying his hand on Laertes's head.]

And these few precepts in thy memory

See thou character. Give thy thoughts no tongue;

Nor any unproportion'd thought his act.

Be thou familiar, but by no means vulgar;

The friends thou hast, and their adoption try'd,

Grapple them to thy soul with hooks of steel:

But do not dull thy palm with entertainment

Of each new-hatch'd, unfledg'd comrade. Beware

Of entarnce to a quarrel: but being in,

Bear't that the oppoed may beware of thee.

Give every man thine ear; but few thy voice.

Take each man's censure; but reserve thy judgment.

Costly thy habit as thy purse can buy,

But not exprest'd in fancy; rich, not gaudy;

For the apparel oft proclaims the man,

And they in France of the best rank and station

Are most select and generous, chief in that.

Neither a borrower, nor a lender be:

For loan oft loses both itself and friend;

And borrowing dulls the edge of husbandry.

This above all; to thine own self be true;

And it must follow, as the light the day,

Thou canst not then be false to any man.

Farewell, my blessing season this in thee!

Laer. Most humbly I do take my leave, my Lord.

Pol. The time invests you; go, your servants tend.

Laer. Farewell, Ophelia, and remember well

What I have said.

Oph. 'Tis in my memory lock'd,
And you yourself shall keep the key of it.

Laer. Farewell. [Exit Laer.]

Pol. What is't, Ophelia, he hath said to you?

Oph. So please you, something touchings the Lord
Hamlet.

Pol. Marry, well bethought! 'Tis told me, he hath very oft of late
Given private time to you; and you yourself
Have of your audience been most free and bounteous.
If it be so, (as so 'tis put on me,
And that in way of caution), I must tell you,
You do not understand yourself so clearly
As it behoves my daughter, and your honour.
What is between you? give me up the truth.

Oph. He hath, my Lord, of late made many tenders
Of his affection to me.

Pol. Affection! puh! you speak like a green girl,
Unfitted in such perilous circumstance.
Do you believe his tenders, as you call them?

Oph. I do not know, my Lord, what I should think.

Pol. Marry, I'll teach you; think yourself a baby;
That you have ta'en his tenders for true pay,
Which are not sterling. Tender yourself more dearly;
Or (not to crack the wind of the poor phrase,
Wringing it thus) you'll tender me a fool.

Oph. My Lord, he hath importun'd me with love,
In honourable fashion.

Pol. Ay, fashion you may call't: go to, go to.

Oph. And hath giv'n count'nance to his speech, my
Lord,
With almost all the holy vows of heav'n.

Pol. Ay, springes to catch woodcocks. I do know,
When the blood burns, how prodigal the soul
Lends the tongue vows: These blazes, oh my daughter,
Giving more light than heat, extinct in both,
Even in the promise as it is a-making,
You must not take for fire. From this time,
Be somewhat scantier of your maiden-presence,

Set your intraitsments at a higher rate,
 Than a command to parley. For Lord Hamlet,
 Believe so much in him, that he is young;
 And with a larger teher he may walk,
 Than may be given you. In few, Ophelia,
 Do not believe his vows; for they are brokers,
 Not of that dye which their investments shew,
 But mere implorers of unholy suits,
 Breathing like sanctified and pious bauds,
 The better to beguile. This is for all:
 I would not, in plain terms, from this time forth,
 Have you to slander any moment's leisure,
 As to give words to talk to the Lord Hamlet.
 Look to't, I charge you. Come your way.
Oph. I shall obey, my Lord. [Exit.

S C E N E VII.

Changes to a Platform before the Palace.

Enter HAMLET, HORATIO, and MARCELLUS.

Ham. The air bites shrewdly; it is very cold.

Hor. It is a nipping and an eager air.

Ham. What hour now?

Hor. I think it lacks of twelve.

Mar. No, it is struck.

Hor. I heard it not; it then draws near the season
 Wherein the spirit held his wont to walk.

[Noise of warlike music within.]

What does this mean, my Lord?

Ham. The King doth walk to-night, and takes his
 rouse,

Keeps wassel, and the swagg'ring up-spring reels;

And as he drains his draughts of Rhenish down,

The kettle-drum and trumpet thus bray out

The triumph of his pledge.

Hor. Is it a custom?

Ham. Ay, marry is't.

But, to my mind, though I am native here,

And to the manner born, it is a custom
More honour'd in the breach, than the observance.

Enter Ghost.

Hor. Look, my Lord, it comes!

Ham. Angels and ministers of grace defend us!
Be thou a spirit of health, or goblin damn'd,
Bringst with thee airs from heav'n, or blasts from hell,
Be thy advent wicked or charitable,
Thou com'st in such a questionable shape,
That I will speak to thee. I'll call thee Hamlet,
King, father, royal Dane: oh! answer me;
Let me not burst in ignorance; but tell,
Why thy canoniz'd bones, hearsed in earth,
Have burst their cearments? why the sepulchre,
Wherein we saw thee quietly inurn'd,
Hath op'd his ponderous and marble jaws,
To cast thee up again? What may this mean?
That thou, dead corse, again, in compleat steel,
Revisit'st thus the glimpses of the moon,
Making night hideous, and us fools of nature
So horribly to shake our disposition
With thoughts beyond the reaches of our souls?
Say, why is this? wherefore? what should we do?

[Ghost beckons to Hamlet.]

Hor. It beckons you to go away with it,
As if it some impartment did desire
Te. you alone.

Mar. Look with what courteous action
It waves you to a more removed ground.
But do not go with it.

Hor. No, by no means. *[Holding Hamlet.]*

Ham. It will not speak; then I will follow it.

Hor. Do not, my Lord.

Ham. Why, what should be the fear?
I do not set my life at a pin's fee;
And, for my soul, what can it do to that,
Being a thing immortal as itself?
It waves me forth again. — I'll follow it —

Hor. What if it tempt you tow'rd the flood, my Lord?
Or to the dreadful summit of the cliff,
That beetles o'er its base into the sea;
And there assume some other horrible form,
Which might deprave your sev'reignty of reason,
And draw you into madness? think of it.
The very place puts toys of desperation,
Without more motive, into every brain,
That looks so many fathoms to the sea;
And hears it roar beneath.

Ham. It waves me still: go on, I'll follow thee.

Mar. You shall not go, my Lord.

Ham. Hold off your hands.

Mar. Be rul'd, you shall not go.

Ham. My fate cries out,
And makes each petty artery in this body
As hardy as the Nemean lion's nerve.
Still am I call'd: unhand me, Gentlemen——

[*Breaking from them.*]

By Heav'n I'll make a ghost of him that holds me—
I say, away——go on——I'll follow thee——

[*Exeunt Ghost and Hamlet.*]

Hor. He waxes desp'rate with imagination.

Mar. Let's follow, 'tis not fit thus to obey him.

Hor. Have after.——To what issue will this come?

Mar. Something is rotten in the state of Denmark.

Hor. Heaven will direct it.

Mar. Nay, let's follow him.

[*Exeunt.*]

S C E N E VIII.

Changes to a more remote part of the Platform.

Re-enter GHOST and HAMLET.

Ham. Where wilt thou lead me? speak; I'll go no further.

Ghost. Mark me.

Ham. I will.

Ghost. My hour is almost come,

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ACT I. PRINCE of DENMARK. 27

When I to sulphurous and tormenting flames
Must render up myself.

Ham. Alas, poor Ghost!

Ghost. Pity me not, but lend thy serious hearing
To what I shall unfold.

Ham. Speak, I am bound to hear.

Ghost. So art thou to revenge, when thou shalt hear.

Ham. What?

Ghost. I am thy father's spirit;
Doom'd for a certain term to walk the night,
And, for the day, confin'd too fast in fires;
Till the foul crimes done in my days of nature,
Are burnt and purg'd away. But that I am forbid
To tell the secrets of my prison-house,
I could a tale unfold, whose lightest word
Would harrow up thy soul, freeze thy young blood,
Make thy two eyes, like stars, start from their spheres,
Thy knotty and combined locks to part,
And each particular hair to stand on end,
Like quills upon the fretful porcupine:
But this eternal blazon may not be
To ears of flesh and blood; list, list, oh list!
If thou didst ever thy dear father love—

Ham. O Heaven!

Ghost. Revenge his foul and most unnatural murder.

Ham. Murder!

Ghost. Murder most foul, as in the best it is;
But this most foul, strange, and unnatural.

Ham. Haste me to know it, that I, with wings as
swift

As meditation or the thoughts of love,
May sweep to my revenge.

Ghost. I find thee apt;
And duller shouldst thou be, than the fat weed
That roots itself in ease on Lethe's wharf,
Would thou not stir in this. Now, Hamlet, hear:
'Tis given out, that, sleeping in my orchard,
A serpent stung me. So, the whole ear of Denmark
Is by a forged process of my death

Rankly abus'd : but know, thou noble youth,
The serpent that did sting thy father's life,
Now wears his crown.

Ham. Oh, my prophetic soul ! my uncle ?

Ghost. Ay, that incestuous, that adulterate beast,
With witchcraft of his wit, with trait'rous gifts,
(O wicked wit, and gifts that have the power
So to seduce !) won to his shameful lust
The will of my most seeming virtuous queen.
Oh Hamlet, what a falling off was there !
From me, whose love was of that dignity,
That it went hand in hand ev'n with the vow
I made to her in marriage ; and to decline
Upon a wretch, whose natural gifts were poor
To those of mine !
But Virtue, as it never will be mov'd,
Though lewdness court it in a shape of heaven ;
So Lust, though to a radiant angel link'd,
Will fate itself in a celestial bed,
And prey on garbage——
But, soft ! methinks I scent the morning air——
Brief let me be : sleeping within mine orchard,
My custom always of the afternoon,
Upon my secure hour thy uncle stole
With juice of curd'd hebenon in a phial,
And in the porches of mine ears did pour
The leperous distilment ; whose effect
Holds such an enmity with blood of man,
That swift as quick-silver it courses through
The nat'ral gates and alleys of the body ;
And with a sudden vigour, it doth posset
And curd, like eager droppings into milk,
The thin and wholesome blood : so did it mine,
And a most instant tetter bark'd about,
Most lazar like, with vile and loathsome crust
All my smooth body.——
Thus was I, sleeping, by a brother's hand,
Of life, of crown, of queen, at once dispatch'd ;
Cut off even in the blossoms of my sin,

ACT I. PRINCE OF DENMARK.

29

Unhousel'd, unanointed, unaneal'd :
 No reck'ning made, but sent to my account
 With all my imperfections on my head.
 Oh horrible ! oh horrible ! most horrible !
 If thou hast nature in thee, bear it not ;
 Let not the royal bed of Denmark be
 A couch for luxury and damned incest.
 But howsoever thou pursu'st this act,
 Taint not thy mind, nor let thy soul contrive
 Against thy mother aught ; leave her to Heaven,
 And to those thorns that in her bosom lodge,
 To prick and sting her. Fare thee well at once !
 The glow-worm shews the matin to be near,
 And 'gins to pale his uneffectual fire.
 Adieu, adieu, adieu : remember me. [Exit.]

Ham. Oh, all you host of heav'n ! oh earth ! what else ?
 And shall I couple hell ? oh fy ! hold my heart :
 And you, my sinews, grow not instant old ;
 But bear me stiffly up. Remember thee !
 Ay, thou poor ghost, while memory holds a seat
 In this distracted globe ; remember thee !
 Yea, from the table of my memory
 I'll wipe away all trivial fond records,
 All saws of books, all forms, all pressures past,
 That youth and observation copied there ;
 And thy commandment all alone shall live
 Within the book and volume of my brain,
 Unmix'd with baser matter. Yes, by Heav'n's ;
 Oh, most pernicious woman !
 Oh villain, villain, smiling damned villain !
 My tables, — meet it is I set it down,
 That one may smile, and smile, and be a villain ;
 At least, I'm sure it may be so in Denmark. [Writing.]
 So, uncle, there you are ; now to my word ;
 It is, Adieu, adieu, remember me :
 I've sworn it —

S C E N E IX.

*Enter HORATIO and MARCELLUS.**Hor.* My Lord, my Lord,——*Mar.* Lord Hamlet,——*Hor.* Heav'n secure him!*Mar.* So be it.*Hor.* Ille, ho, ho, my Lord!*Ham.* Hillo, ho, ho, boy; come, bird, come.*Mar.* How is't, my noble Lord?*Hor.* What news, my Lord?*Ham.* Oh, wonderful!*Hor.* Good my Lord, tell it.*Ham.* No, you'll reveal it.*Hor.* Not I, my Lord, by Heav'n.*Mar.* Nor I, my Lord.*Ham.* How say you then, would heart of man once think it?*But you'll be secret——**Both.* Ay, by Heav'n, my Lord.*Ham.* There's ne'er a villain dwelling in all Denmark,
*But he's an arrant knave.**Hor.* There needs no ghost, my Lord, come from
the grave*To tell us this.**Ham.* Why, right, you are i' th' right;
And so, without more circumstance at all,
I hold it fit that we shake hands, and part;
You, as your business and desires shall point you;
(For every man has business and desire,
Such as it is); and, for my own poor part,
I will go pray.*Hor.* These are but wild and whurling words, my
Lord.*Ham.* I'm sorry they offend you, heartily;
Yes, heartily.*Hor.* There's no offence, my Lord.*Ham.* Yes, by St Patrick, but there is, my Lord;
And much offence too, Touching this vision here——

ACT I. PRINCE of DENMARK.

31

It is an honest ghost, that let me tell you :
For your desire to know what is between us,
O'er-master it as you may. And now, good friends,
As you are friends, scholars, and soldiers,
Give me one poor request.

Hor. What is't, my Lord?

Ham. Never make known what you have seen to-night.

Both. My Lord, we will not.

Ham. Nay, but swear't.

Hor. In faith, my Lord, not I.

Mar. Nor I, my Lord, in faith.

Ham. Upon my sword.

Mar. We have sworn, my Lord, already.

Ham. Indeed, upon my sword, indeed.

Ghost. Swear. *[Ghost cries under the stage.]*

Ham. Ah ha, boy, sayst thou so? art thou there,
true-penny?

Come on, you hear this fellow in the cellaridge.

Consent to swear.

Hor. Propose the oath, my Lord.

Ham. Never to speak of this that you have seen,

Swear by my sword.

Ghost. Swear.

Ham. *Hic et ubique?* Then we'll shift our ground.

Come hither, Gentlemen.

And lay your hands again upon my sword.

Never to speak of this which you have heard,

Swear by my sword.

Ghost. Swear by his sword.

Ham. Well said, old mole; can't work i' th' ground
so fast?

A worthy pioneer! Once more remove, good friends.

Hor. Oh day and night! but this is wondrous strange.

Ham. And therefore as a stranger give it welcome.

There are more things in heav'n and earth, Horatio,

Than are dream'd of in your philosophy. But come,

Here, as before, never, (so help you mercy!)

How strange or odd soe'er I bear myself,

(As I, perchance, hereafter shall think meet

To put an antic disposition on),
That you, at such time seeing me, never shall,
With arms incumbered thus, or this head-shake;
Or by pronouncing of some doubtful phrase,
As, Well—we know;—or, We could, and, If we
would;—

Or, If we list to speak;—or, There be, and if there
might—

(Or such ambiguous givings out), denote
That you know aught of me; this do ye swear,
So grace and mercy at your most need help you
Swear.

Ghost. Swear.

Ham. Rest, rest, perturbed spirit. So, Gentlemen,
With all my love do I commend me to you;
And what so poor a man as Hamlet is,
May do t' express his love and friending to you,
God willing, shall not lack: let us go in together,
And still your fingers on your lips, I pray:
The time is out of joint; oh, cursed spite!
That ever I was born to set it right.
Nay, come, let us go together. [*Exeunt.*]

ACT II. SCENE I.

An Apartment in Polonius's House.

Enter POLONIUS and REYNOLDO.

POLONIUS.

GIVE him this money, and these notes, Reynoldo.

Rey. I will, my Lord.

Pol. You shall do marvellous wisely, good Reynoldo,
Before you visit him, to make enquiry
Of his behaviour.

Rey. My Lord, I did intend it.

Pol. Marry, well said; very well said. Look you,
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ACT II. PRINCE of DENMARK. 33

Inquire me first what Danfers are in Paris;
And how, and who, what means, and where they keep,
What company, at what expence; and finding,
By this incompassment and drift of question,
That they do know my son, come you more near;
Then your particular demands will touch it;
Take you as 'twere some distant knowledge of him,
As thus—I know his father and his friends,
And, in part, him.—Do you mark this, Reynoldo?

Rey. Ay, very well, my Lord.

Pol. And, in part, him—but, you may say—Not well;
But it't be he I mean, he's very wild;
Addicted so and so—and there put on him
What forgeries you please; marry, none so rank,
As may dishonour him; take heed of that;
But, Sir, such wanton, wild, and usual slips,
As are companions noted and most known
To youth and liberty.

Rey. As gaming, my Lord—

Pol. Ay, or drinking, fencing, swearing,
Quarrelling, drabbing.—You may go so far.

Rey. My Lord, that would dishonour him.

Pol. 'Faith, no, as you may season it in the charge;
You must not put an utter scandal on him,
That he is open to incontinency,
That's not my meaning; but breathe his faults
quaintly,

That they may seem the taints of liberty;
The flash and outbreak of a fiery mind,
A savageness in unreclaimed blood
Of general assault.

Rey. But, my good Lord—

Pol. Wherefore should you do this?

Rey. Ay, ay, my Lord, I would know that.

Pol. Marry, Sir, here's my drift;
And I believe it is a fetch of wit.
You laying these slight follies on my son,
As 'twere a thing a little foild i' th' working,
Mark you, your party in converse, he you would sound,

Having ever seen, in the prenominate crimes,
The youth you breathe of, guilty, be assur'd,
He closes with you in this consequence;
Good Sir, or Sire, or Friend, or Gentleman,
(According to the phrase or the addition
Of man and country).

Rey. Very good, my Lord.

Pol. And then, Sir, does he this:
He does,———what was I about to say?
I was about to say something—where did I leave?

Rey. At 'closes in the consequence.'

Pol. At closes in the consequence—Ay, marry.
He closes thus:——I know the gentleman;
I saw him yesterday, or t'other day,
Or then, with such and such; and, as you say,
There was he gaming, there o'ertook in's rowse,
There falling out at tennis; or, perchance,
I saw him enter such a house of sale,
Videlicet, a brothel, or so, forsooth.—See you now;
Your bait of falsehood takes this carp of truth;
And thus do we of wisdom and of reach,
With windlaces, and with assays of bias,
By indirections find directions out:

So by my former lecture and advice
Shall you my son. You have me, have you not?

Rey. My Lord; I have.

Pol. God b' wi' you; fare you well.

Rey. Good, my Lord.

Pol. Observe his inclination ev'n yourself.

Rey. I shall, my Lord.

Pol. And let him play his music.

Rey. Well, my Lord. [Exit.

S C E N E H.

Enter OPHELIA.

Pol. Farewell. How now, Ophelia, what's the matter?

Oph. Alas, my Lord, I have been so affrighted!

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Pol. With what, in the name of Heav'n?

Oph. My Lord, as I was sewing in my closet,
Lord Hamlet, with his doublet all unbrac'd,
No hat upon his head, his stockings loose,
Ungarter'd, and down-gyred to his ankle;
Pale as his shirt, his knees knocking each other,
And with a look so piteous in purport,
As if he had been loosed out of hell,
To speak of horrors; thus he comes before me.

Pol. Mad for thy love?

Oph. My Lord, I do not know;
But truly I do fear it.

Pol. What said he?

Oph. He took me by the wrist, and held me hard;
Then goes he to the length of all his arm;
And with his other hand, thus o'er his brow,
He falls to such perusal of my face,
As he would draw it. Long time staid he so;
At last a little shaking of mine arm,
And thrice his head thus waving up and down,
He rais'd a sigh, so piteous and profound,
That it did seem to shatter all his bulk,
And end his being. Then he lets me go,
And, with his head over his shoulder turn'd,
He seem'd to find his way without his eyes;
For out o' doors he went without their help,
And to the last, bended their light on me.

Pol. Come, go with me, I will go seek the King:
This is the very ecstasy of love;
Whose violent property foregoes itself,
And leads the will to desp'rate undertakings,
As oft as any passion under heav'n,
That does afflict our natures. I am sorry;
What, have you giv'n him any hard words of late?

Pol. No, my good Lord; but as you did command,
I did repel his letters, and deny'd
His access to me.

Pol. That hath made him mad.
I'm sorry, that with better speed and judgment

I had not noted him. I fear'd he trifled,
 And meant to wreck thee: but beshrew my jealousy;
 It seems it is as proper to our age
 To cast beyond ourselves in our opinions,
 As it is common for the younger sort
 To lack discretion. Come; go we to the King.
 This must be known; which, being kept close, might
 move

More grief to hide, than hate to utter love. [*Exeunt.*]

S C E N E III.

Changes to the Palace.

*Enter KING, QUEEN, ROSINCRANTZ, GUILDEN-
 STERN, Lords, and other Attendants.*

King. Welcome, dear Rosincrantz and Guildenstern!
 Moreover, that we much did long to see you,
 The need we have to use you, did provoke
 Our hasty sending. Something you have heard
 Of Hamlet's transformation; so I call it,
 Since not th' exterior, nor the inward man
 Resembles that it was. What should it be
 More than his father's death, that thus hath put him
 So much from th' understanding of himself,
 I cannot dream of. I entreat you both,
 That being of so young days brought up with him,
 And since so neighbour'd to his youth and 'haviour,
 That you vouchsafe your rest here in our court
 Some little time; so by your companies
 To draw him on to pleasures, and to gather,
 So much as from occasions you may glean,
 If ought to us unknown afflicts him thus,
 That, open'd, lyes within our remedy.

Queen. Good Gentlemen, he hath much talk'd of you;
 And sure I am, two men there are not living
 To whom he more adheres. If it will please you
 To shew us so much gentry and good-will,
 As to extend your time with us a while,

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For the supply and profit of our hope,
Your visitation shall receive such thanks,
As fits a King's remembrance.

Ros. Both your Majesties

Might by the sov'reign power you have of us
Put your dread pleasures more into command
Than to entreaty.

Guil. But we both obey,
And here give up ourselves, in the full bent,
To lay our service freely at your feet.

King. Thanks, Rosincrantz and gentle Guildenstern.

Queen. Thanks, Guildenstern and gentle Rosincrantz.
And I beseech you instantly to visit

My too much changed son. Go, some of ye,
And bring these gentlemen where Hamlet is.

Guil. Heav'n's make our presence and our practices
Pleasant and helpful to him! *[Exeunt Ros. and Guil.]*

Queen. Amen.

Enter POLONIUS.

Pol. Th' ambassadors from Norway, my good Lord,
Are joyfully return'd.

King. Thou still hast been the father of good news.

Pol. Have I, my Lord? assure you, my good Liege,
I hold my duty, as I hold my soul,
Both to my God, and to my gracious King;
And I do think, (or else this brain of mine
Hunts not the trail of policy so sure
As I have us'd to do), that I have found
The very cause of Hamlet's lunacy.

King. Oh, speak of that, that do I long to hear.

Pol. Give first admittance to th' ambassadors:
My news shall be the fruit to that great feast.

King. Thyself do grace to them, and bring them in.

[Exit Pol.]

He tells me, my sweet Queen, that he hath found
The head and source of all your son's distemper.

Queen. I doubt, it is no other but the main,
His father's death, and our o'erhasty marriage.

S C E N E IV.

Re-enter POLONIUS, *with* VOLTIMAND, *and* CORNELIUS.

King. Well, we shall list him.—Welcome, my good friends!

Say, Voltimand, what from our brother Norway?

Volt. Most fair return of greetings and desires.

Upon our first, he sent out to suppress

His nephew's levies, which to him appear'd

To be a preparation 'gainst the Polack:

But, better look'd into, he truly found,

It was against your Highness: whereat griev'd,

That so his sickness, age, and impotence

Was falsely borne in hand, sends out arrest,

On Fortinbras; which he, in brief, obeys;

Receives rebuke from Norway; and, in fine,

Makes vow before his uncle, never more

To give th' assay of arms against your Majesty.

Whereon old Norway, overcome with joy,

Gives him three thousand crowns in annual fee;

And his commission to employ those soldiers,

So levied as before, against the Polack:

With an entreaty, herein further shewn,

That it might please you to give quiet pass

Through your dominions for this enterprise,

On such regards of safety and allowance,

As therein are set down.

King. It likes us well;

And at our more consider'd time we'll read,

Answer, and think upon this business.

Mean time, we thank you for your well-took labour:

Go to your rest; at night we'll feast together.

Most welcome home! [*Exit Ambaf.*]

Pol. This business is well ended.

My Liege, and Madam, to expostulate

What majesty should be, what duty is,

Act II. PRINCE of DENMARK. 39

Why day is day, night night, and time is time,
Were nothing but to waste night, day, and time.
Therefore, since brevity's the soul of wit,
And tediousness the limbs and outward flourishes,
I will be brief: your noble son is mad.
Mad, call I it: for, to define true madness,
What is't, but to be nothing else but mad?
But let that go.——

Queen. More matter with less art.

Pol. Madam, I swear, I use no art at all:——
That he is mad, 'tis true; 'tis true, 'tis pity;
And pity 'tis, 'tis true; a foolish figure;
But farewell it; for I will use no art.
Mad let us grant him then; and now remains
That we find out the cause of this effect,
Or rather say, the cause of this defect,
For this effect, defective, comes by cause;
Thus it remains, and the remainder thus.——*Per-*
pend.——

I have a daughter; have, whilst she is mine;
Who, in her duty and obedience, mark,
Hath giv'n me this; now gather, and surmise.

He opens a letter and reads.

To the celestial, and my soul's idol, the most beautified
Ophelia.—That's an ill phrase, a vile phrase: *beautified*
is a vile phrase; but you shall hear—*These to her*
excellent white bosom, these.——

Queen. Came this from Hamlet to her?

Pol. Good Madam, stay a while, I will be faithful.

Doubt thou the stars are fire; [Reading.

Doubt that the sun doth move;

Doubt truth to be a liar,

But never doubt I love.

Oh, dear Ophelia, I am ill at these numbers; I have not
art to reckon my groans; but that I love thee best, oh
most best, believe it. Adieu.

Thine evermore, most dear Lady, whilst
this machine is to him, HAMLET.

This in obedience hath my daughter shewn me;
And, more above, hath his solicitings,
As they fell out by time, by means, and place,
All given to mine ear.

King. But how hath she receiv'd his love?

Pol. What do you think of me?

King. As of a man faithful and honourable.

Pol. I would fain prove so. But what might you think?

When I had seen this hot love on the wing,
(As I perceiv'd it, I must tell you that,
Before my daughter told me), what might you,
Or my dear Majesty your Queen here, think?
If I had play'd the desk or table-book,
Or giv'n my heart a working mate and dumb,
Or look'd upon this love with idle sight;
What might you think? no, I went round to work,
And my young mistress thus I did bespeak;
Lord Hamlet is a prince out of thy sphere,
This must not be; and then I precepts gave her,
That she should lock herself from his resort,
Admit no messengers, receive no tokens:
Which done, see to the fruits of my device;
For, he repulsed, a short tale to make,
Fell to a sadness, then into a fast,
Thence to a watching, thence into a weakness,
Thence to a lightness; and, by this declension,
Into the madness wherein now he raves,
And all we wail for.

King. Do you think this?

Queen. It may be very likely.

Pol. Hath there been such a time, I'd fain know that,
That I have positively said, 'tis so,
When it prov'd otherwise?

King. Not that I know.

Pol. Take this from this, if this be otherwise.

[Pointing to his head and shoulder.

If circumstances lead me, I will find
Where truth is hid, though it were hid indeed
Within the centre.

King. How may we try it further?

Pol. You know, sometimes he walks for hours together,
Here in the lobby.

Queen. So he does indeed.

Pol. At such a time I'll loose my daughter to him;
Be you and I behind an arras then,
Mark the encounter; if he love her not,
And be not from his reason fall'n thereon,
Let me be no assistant for a state,
But keep a farm and carters.

King. We will try it.

S C E N E V.

Enter HAMLET reading.

Queen. But look where, sadly, the poor wretch comes
reading.

Pol. Away, I do beseech you, both away.
I'll board him presently. [*Exeunt King and Queen.*]

Oh, give me leave.——How does my good Lord
Hamlet?

Ham. Well, God o'merey.

Pol. Do you know me, my Lord?

Ham. Excellent well, you are a fishmonger.

Pol. Not I, my Lord.

Ham. Then I would you were so honest a man.

Pol. Honest, my Lord?

Ham. Ay, Sir; to be honest as this world goes, is
to be one man pick'd out of ten thousand.

Pol. That's very true, my Lord.

Ham. For if the sun breed maggots in a dead dog,
Being a god, kissing carrion——

Have you a daughter?

Pol. I have, my Lord.

Ham. Let her not walk i' th' sun; conception is a
blessing, but not as your daughter may conceive.
Friend, look to't.

Pol. How say you by that? Still harping on my
daughter!——

Yet he knew me not at first; he said I was a fishmonger.

He is far gone; and, truly, in my youth, [*Aside.*
 I suffer'd much extremity for love;
 Very near this.——I'll speak to him again.
 What do you read, my Lord?

Ham. Words, words, words.

Pol. What is the matter, my Lord?

Ham. Between whom?

Pol. I mean the matter that you read, my Lord.

Ham. Slanders, Sir: for the satirical slave says here, that old men have grey beards; that their faces are wrinkled; their eyes purging thick amber, and plumtree gum; and that they have a plentiful lack of wit; together with most weak hams. All which, Sir, though I most powerfully and potently believe, yet I hold it not honestly to have it thus set down; for yourself, Sir, shall be as old as I am, if, like a crab, you could go backward.

Pol. Though this be madness, yet there's method in't.
 Will you walk out of the air, my Lord?

Ham. Into my grave.——

Pol. Indeed that is out o' th' air:——

How pregnant (sometimes) his replies are?

A happiness that often madness hits on,

Which sanity and reason could not be

So prosp'rously deliver'd of. I'll leave him,

And suddenly contrive the means of meeting

Between him and my daughter.

My honourable Lord, I will most humbly

Take my leave of you.

Ham. You cannot, Sir, take from me any thing that I will more willingly part withal, except my life.

Pol. Fare you well, my Lord.

Ham. These tedious old fools!

Pol. You go to seek Lord Hamlet; there he is. [*Exit.*

S C E N E VI.

Enter ROSINCRANTZ and GUILDENSTERN.

Ros. God save you, Sir!

Guil. Mine honour'd Lord!

Ros. My most dear Lord!

Ham. My excellent good friends! How dost thou, Guildenstern?

Oh, Rosincrantz, good lads! how do ye both?

Ros. As the indifferent children of the earth.

Guil. Happy, in that we are not over-happy; on Fortune's cap we are not the very burton.

Ham. Nor the soles of her shoe?

Ros. Neither, my Lord.

Ham. Then you live about her waist, or in the middle of her favours?

Guil. 'Faith, in her privates we.

Ham. In the secret parts of Fortune? oh, most true; she is a strumpet. What news?

Ros. None, my Lord; but that the world's grown honest.

Ham. Then is dooms-day near; but your news, is not true. Let me question more in particular. What have you, my good friends, deserved at the hands of Fortune, that she sends you to prison hither?

Guil. Prison, my Lord!

Ham. Denmark's a prison.

Ros. Then is the world one.

Ham. A goodly one, in which there are many confines, wards, and dungeons; Denmark being one of th' worst.

Ros. We think not so, my Lord.

Ham. Why, then, 'tis none to you; for there is nothing either good or bad, but thinking makes it so. To me it is a prison.

Ros. Why, then your ambition makes it one: 'tis too narrow for your mind.

Ham. Oh God, I could be bounded in a nut-shell, and count myself a king of infinite space, were it not that I have bad dreams.

Guil. Which dreams, indeed, are ambition; for the very substance of the ambitious is merely the shadow of a dream.

Ham. A dream itself is but a shadow.

Ros. Truly, and I hold ambition of so airy and light a quality, that it is but a shadow's shadow.

Ham. Then are our beggars, bodies; and our monarchs and outstretch'd heroes, the beggars' shadows. Shall we to th' court? for, by my fay, I cannot reason.

Both. We'll wait upon you.

Ham. No such matter. I will not fort you with the rest of my servants: for, to speak to you like an honest man, I am most dreadfully attended; but, in the beaten way of friendship, what make you at Elsinoor?

Ros. To visit you, my Lord; no other occasion.

Ham. Beggar that I am, I am even poor in thanks; but I thank you; and sure, dear friends, my thanks are too dear of a halfpenny. Were you not sent for? is it your own inclining? is it a free visitation? Come, deal justly with me; come, come; nay, speak.

Guil. What should we say, my Lord?

Ham. Any thing, but to the purpose. You were sent for; and there is a kind of confession in your looks, which your modesties have not craft enough to colour. I know the good King and Queen have sent for you.

Ros. To what end, my Lord?

Ham. That you must teach me; but let me conjure you by the rights of our fellowship, by the consonancy of our youth, by the obligation of our ever-preserved love, and by what more dear a better proposer could charge you withal, be even and direct with me, whether you were sent for or no?

Ros. What say you? [To Guild.]

Ham. Nay, then I have an eye of you: if you love me, hold not off.

Guil. My Lord, we were sent for.

Ham. I will tell you why; so shall my anticipation prevent your discovery, and your secrecy to the King and Queen moults no feather. I have of late, but wherefore I know not, lost all my mirth, foregone all custom of exercise; and indeed it goes so heavily with my disposition, that this goodly frame, the earth, seems to me a steril promontory; this most excellent canopy,

the air, look you, this brave o'erhanging firmament, this majestical roof fretted with golden fire, why, it appears no other thing to me, than a foul and pestilent congregation of vapours. What a piece of work is a man! how noble in reason! how infinite in faculties! in form and moving how express and admirable! in action how like an angel! in apprehension how like a god! the beauty of the world; the paragon of animals; and yet to me, what is this quintessence of dust? Man delights not me, nor woman neither; though by your smiling you seem to say so.

Ros. My Lord, there was no such stuff in my thoughts.

Ham. Why did you laugh, when I said man delights not me?

Ros. To think, my Lord, if you delight not in man, what lenten entertainment the players shall receive from you. We accosted them on the way, and hither are they coming to offer you their service.

Ham. He that plays the king shall be welcome; his majesty shall have tribute of me; the adventurous knight shall use his foil and target; the lover shall not sigh gratis; the humorous man shall end his part in peace; the clown shall make those laugh whose lungs are tickled o' th' sere; and the lady shall say her mind freely, or the blank verse shall halt for't. What players are they?

Ros. Even those you were wont to take delight in, the tragedians of the city.

Ham. How chances it they travel? their residence both in reputation and profit was better, both ways.

Ros. I think their inhibition comes by the means of the late innovation.

Ham. Do they hold the same estimation they did when I was in the city? are they so follow'd?

Ros. No, indeed, they are not.

Ham. How comes it? do they grow rusty?

Ros. Nay, their endeavour keeps in the wonted pace: but there is, Sir, an aciry of children, little eyases; that cry out on the top of question, and are most tyrannical.

nically clapt for't. These are now the fashion, and so berattle the common stages, (so they call them), that many wearing rapiers are afraid of goose-quills, and dare scarce come hither.

Ham. What, are they children? who maintains 'em? how are they escorted? will they pursue the quality no longer than they can sing? will they not say afterwards, if they should grow themselves to common players? (as it is most like, if their means are no better); their writers do them wrong to make them exclaim against their own succession.

Ros. Faith, there has been much to do on both sides; and the nation holds it no sin to tarre them on to controversy. There was for a while no money bid for argument, unless the poet and the player went to cuffs in the question.

Ham. Is't possible?

Guil. Oh, there has been much throwing about of brains.

Ham. Do the boys carry it away?

Ros. Ay, that they do, my Lord, Hercules and his load too.

Ham. It is not strange; for mine uncle is King of Denmark; and those that would make mowes at him while my father lived, give twenty, forty, fifty, an hundred ducats, apiece, for his picture in little. There is something in this more than natural, if philosophy could find it.

[Flourish for the players.]

Guil. There are the players.

Ham. Gentlemen, you are welcome to Elsinoor; your hands: come then, the appurtenance of welcome is fashion and ceremony. Let me comply with you in this garb, lest my extent to the players (which, I tell you, must shew fairly outward) should appear more like entertainment than yours. You are welcome; but my uncle-father and aunt-mother are deceiv'd.

Guil. In what, my dear Lord?

Ham. I am but mad north, north-west; when the wind is southerly, I know a hawk from a handlaw.

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SCENE VII.

Enter POLONIUS.

Pol. Well be with you, Gentlemen.

Ham. Hark you, Guildenstern, and you too, at each ear a hearer; that great baby you see there, is not yet out of his swathing-clouts.

Ros. Haply he's the second time come to them; for they say an old man is twice a child.

Ham. I will prophesy, he comes to tell me of the players. Mark it;—you say right, Sir; for on Monday morning 'twas so indeed.

Pol. My Lord, I have news to tell you.

Ham. My Lord, I have news to tell you.
When Roscius was an actor in Rome——

Pol. The actors are come hither, my Lord.

Ham. Buzze, buzze——

Pol. Upon mine honour——

Ham. *Then came each actor on his ass.*——

Pol. The best actors in the world, either for tragedy, comedy, history, pastoral, pastoral-comical, historical-pastoral, scene individable, or poem unlimited. Seneca cannot be too heavy, nor Plautus too light. For the law of wit, and the liberty, these are the only men.

Ham. Oh, Jephthah, judge of Israel, what a treasure hadst thou!

Pol. What a treasure had he, my Lord?

Ham. Why, one fair daughter, and no more,
The which he loved passing well.

Pol. Still on my daughter.

Ham. Am I not i' th' right, old Jephthah?

Pol. If you call me Jephthah, my Lord, I have a daughter that I love passing well.

Ham. Nay, that follows not.

Pol. What follows then, my Lord?

Ham. Why, as by lot, God wor—and then you know,
it came to pass, as most like it was; the first row of the

rubric will shew you more. For look where my abridgements come.

Enter four or five players.

Y'are welcome, masters, welcome all. I am glad to see thee well; welcome, good friends. Oh! old friend! thy face is valanc'd since I saw thee last; com'st thou to beard me in Denmark? What! my young lady and mistress? b'rlady, your ladyship is nearer heaven than when I saw you last, by the altitude of a chioppine. Pray God your voice, like a piece of uncurrent gold, be not cracked within the ring.—Masters, you are all welcome: we'll e'en to't like friendly faulconers, fly at any thing we see; we'll have a speech straight. Come, give us a taste of your quality; come, a passionate speech.

I Play. What speech, my good Lord?

Ham I heard thee speak me a speech once; but it was never acted: or if it was, not above once; for the play, I remember, pleased not the million. 'Twas Caviar to the general; but it was (as I received it, and others, whose judgment in such matters cried in the top of mine) an excellent play; well digested in the scenes, set down with as much modesty as cunning. I remember one said, there was 'no salt in the lines, to make the matter savoury; nor no matter in the phrase that might indite the author of affectation; but call'd it an honest method. One speech in it I chiefly lov'd; 'twas Æneas's tale to Dido; and thereabout especially, where he speaks of Priam's slaughter. If it live in your memory, begin at this line. let me see, let me see—— The rugged Pyrrhus, like th' Hyrcanian beast, —It is not so; ——it begins with Pyrrhus.

The rugged Pyrrhus, he whose fable arms,
Black as his purpose, did the night resemble
When he lay couched in the ominous horse;
Hath now his dread and black complexion smear'd
With heraldry more dismal; head to foot,
Now is he total gules; horridly trick'd

With blood of fathers, mothers, daughters, sons,
 Bak'd and impasted with the parching fires,
 That lend a tyrannous and damned light
 To murders vile. Roasted in wrath and fire,
 And thus o'er-sized with coagulate gore,
 With eyes like carbuncles, the hellish Pyrrhus
 Old grandfire Priam seeks.

Hol. 'Fore God, my Lord, well spoken, with good
 accent, and good discretion.

I Play. Anon he finds him,

Striking, too short, at Greeks. His antique sword,
 Rebellious to his arm, lyes where it falls,
 Repugnant to command; unequal match'd,
 Pyrrhus at Priam drives, in rage strikes wide;
 But with the whif and wind of his fell sword
 Th' unnerv'd father falls. Then senseless Ilium,
 Seeming to feel this blow, with flaming top
 Stoops to his base; and with a hideous crash
 Takes prisoner Pyrrhus' ear. For lo, his sword,
 Which was declining on the milky head
 Of rev'rend Priam, seem'd i' th' air to stick;
 So, as a painted tyrant, Pyrrhus stood;
 And, like a neutral to his will and matter,
 Did nothing.

But as we often see, against some storm,
 A silence in the heav'ns, the rack stand still,
 The bold wind speechless, and the orb below
 As hush as death; anon the dreadful thunder
 Doth rend the region: so after Pyrrhus' pause,
 A roused vengeance sets him new a-work;
 And never did the Cyclops' hammers fall
 On Mars his armour, forg'd for proof-etern,
 With less remorse than Pyrrhus' bleeding sword
 Now falls on Priam.—

Out, out, thou strumpet Fortune! all you gods,
 In general synod take away her power:
 Break all the spokes and fellies from her wheel,
 And bowl the round nave down the hill of heav'n,
 As low as to the fiends.

Pol. This is too long.

Ham. It shall to th' barber's with your beard. Pr'ythee, say on; he's for a jig, or a tale of bawdry, or he sleeps. Say on, come to Hecuba.

1 Play. But who, oh! who had seen the mobled queen——

Ham. The mobled queen?

Pol. That's good; mobled queen is good.

1 Play. Run bare-foot up and down, threatening the flames

With biffon rheum; a clout upon that head,
Where late the diadem stood; and for a robe
About her lank, and all-o'er-teemed loins,
A blanket in th' alarm of fear caught up;
Who this had seen, with tongue in venom steep'd,
'Gainst Fortune's state would treason have pronounc'd.
But if the gods themselves did see her then,
When she saw Pyrrhus make malicious sport
In mincing with his sword her husband's limbs;
The instant burst of clamour that she made,
(Unless things mortal move them not at all),
Would have made milch the burning eyes of heav'n,
And passion in the gods.

Pol. Look whe'r he has not chang'd his colour, and has tears in his eyes. Pr'ythee, no more.

Ham. 'Tis well, I'll have thee speak out the rest of this soon. Good my Lord, will you see the players well bestow'd? Do ye hear, let them be well us'd; for they are the abstract and brief chronicles of the time. After your death, you were better have a bad epitaph, than their ill report while you liv'd.

Pol. My Lord, I will use them according to their desert.

Ham. God's bodikins, man, much better. Use every man after his desert, and who shall scape whipping? use them after your own honour and dignity. The less they deserve, the more merit is in your bounty. Take them in.

Pol. Come, Sirs.

[Exit Polonius.]

Ham. Follow him, friends: we'll hear all play to-morrow. Dost thou hear me, old friend, can you play the murder of Gonzago?

Play. Ay, my Lord.

Ham. We'll ha't to-morrow night. You could, for a need, study a speech of some dozen or sixteen lines, which I would set down, and insert in't? could ye not?

Play. Ay, my Lord.

Ham. Very well. Follow that Lord, and look you mock him not. My good friends, I'll leave you till night; you are welcome to Elsinoor.

Ros. Good my Lord. [Exeunt.]

S C E N E VIII.

Manet HAMLET.

Ham. Ay, so, God b' w'ye: now I am alone.
Oh, what a rogue and peasant slave am I?
Is it not monstrous, that this player here,
But in a fiction, in a dream of passion,
Could force his soul so to his own conceit,
That from her working, all his visage wan'd;
Tears in his eyes, distraction in his aspect,
A broken voice, and his whole function suiting,
With forms, to his conceit; and all for nothing?
For Hecuba?
What's Hecuba to him, or he to Hecuba,
That he should weep for her? What would he do,
Had he the motive and the cue for passion
That I have? He would drown the stage with tears,
And cleave the gen'ral ear with horrid speech;
Make mad the guilty, and appal the free;
Confound the ign'rant, and amaze, indeed,
The very faculty of eyes and ears.—Yet I,
A dull and muddy-mettled rascal, peak,
Like John-a-dreams, unpregnant of my cause,
And can say nothing,—no, not for a king,
Upon whose property and most dear life
A damn'd defeat was made. Am I a coward?

Who calls me villain, breaks my pate across,
 Plucks off my beard, and blows it in my face;
 Tweaks me by th' nose, gives me the lie i' th' throat,
 As deep as to the lungs? who does me this?
 Ha! why, should I take it—for it cannot be,
 But I am pigeon-liver'd, and lack gall
 To make oppression bitter; or ere this
 I should have fated all the region-kites
 With this slave's offal. Bloody, bawdy villain!
 Remorseless, treacherous, lecherous, kindless villain!
 Why, what an ass am I! this is most brave,
 That I, the son of a dear father murdered,
 Prompted to my revenge by heav'n and hell,
 Must, like a whore, unpack my heart with words,
 And fall a-cursing like a very drab—
 A scullion,—fy upon't! foh!—about, my brain!—
 I've heard, that guilty creatures, at a play,
 Have by the very cunning of the scene
 Been struck so to the soul, that presently
 They have proclaim'd their malefactions.
 For murder, though it have no tongue, will speak
 With most miraculous organ. I'll have these players
 Play something like the murder of my father,
 Before mine uncle. I'll observe his looks;
 I'll tent him to the quick; if he but blench,
 I know my course. The spirit that I have seen,
 May be the devil; and the devil hath power
 T' assume a pleasing shape; yea, and perhaps
 Out of my weakness and my melancholy,
 (As he is very potent with such spirits),
 Abuses me to damn me. I'll have grounds
 More relative than this: the play's the thing
 Wherein I'll catch the conscience of the King. [Exit.]

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ACT III. SCENE I.

The Palace.

Enter KING, QUEEN, POLONIUS, OPHELIA, ROSINCURANTZ, GUILDENSTERN, and Lords.

KING.

AND can you by no drift of conference
Get from him, why he puts on this confusion,
Grating so harshly all his days of quiet,
With turbulent and dangerous lunacy?

Ros. He does confess, he feels himself distracted:
But from what cause, he will by no means speak.

Guil. Nor do we find him forward to be sounded;
But with a crafty madness keeps aloof,
When we would bring him on to some confession
Of his true state.

Queen. Did he receive you well?

Ros. Most like a gentleman.

Guil. But with much forcing of his disposition:

Ros. Most free of question, but of our demands
Niggard in his reply:

Queen. Did you assay him to any pastime?

Ros. Madam, it so fell out, that certain players
We o'er-rode on the way; of these we told him:
And there did seem in him a kind of joy
To hear of it: they are about the court;
And (as I think) they have already order
This night to play before him.

Pol. 'Tis most true:

And he beseech'd me to entreat your Majesties
To hear and see the matter.

King. With all my heart, and it doth much content me
To hear him so inclin'd.

Good Gentlemen, give him a further edge,
And drive his purpose on to these delights.

Ros. We shall, my Lord.

[*Exeunt.*]

King. Sweet Gertrude, leave us too ;
For we have closely sent for Hamlet hither,
That he, as 'twere by accident, may here
Affront Ophelia. Her father, and myself,
Will so bestow ourselves that seeing, unseen,
We may of their encounter frankly judge ;
And gather by him, as he is behaved,
If 't be th' affliction of his love, or no,
That thus he suffers for.

Queen. I shall obey you.

And for my part, Ophelia, I do wish
That your good beauties be the happy cause
Of Hamlet's wildness : so shall I hope your virtues
May bring him to his wonted way again,
To both your honours.

Oph. Madam, I wish it may.

[*Exit Queen.*]

Pol. Ophelia, walk you here—Gracious, so please ye,
We will bestow ourselves—Read on this book :
That shew of such an exercise may colour
Your loneliness. We're oft to blame in this,
'Tis too much prov'd, that with devotion's visage,
And pious action, we do sugar o'er
The devil himself.

King. Oh, 'tis too true.

How smart a lash that speech doth give my conscience !
The harlot's cheek, beautied with plastring art,
Is not more ugly to the thing that helps it,
Than is my deed to my most painted word. [*Aside.*]
Oh heavy burden !

Pol. I hear him coming ; let's withdraw, my Lord.

[*Exeunt all but Ophelia.*]

SCENE II.

Enter HAMLET.

Ham. To be, or not to be * ? that is the question.—

* Of this celebrated soliloquy, which, bursting from a man
distracted with contrariety of desires, and overwhelmed

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Ophelia

Whether 'tis nobler in the mind, to suffer
The slings and arrows of outrageous fortune;
Or to take arms against a fall of troubles,
And by opposing end them?—To die,—to sleep—
No more; and by a sleep, to say, we end
The heart-ache, and the thousand natural shocks
That flesh is heir to: 'tis a consummation
Devoutly to be wish'd. To die—to sleep—
To sleep? perchance to dream; ay, there's the rub—
For in that sleep of death what dreams may come,
When we have shuffled off this mortal coil,
Must give us pause.—There's the respect
That makes calamity of so long life.
For who would bear the whips and scorns of th' time,
Th' oppressor's wrong, the proud man's contumely,

with the magnitude of his own purposes, is connected rather in the speaker's mind, than on his tongue, I shall endeavour to discover the train, and to shew how one sentiment produces another.

Hamlet, knowing himself injured in the most enormous and atrocious degree, and seeing no means of redress, but such as must expose him to the extremity of hazard, meditates on his situation in this manner: *Before I can form any rational scheme of action under this pressure of distress, it is necessary to decide, whether, after our present state, we are to be or not to be. That is the question, which, as it shall be answered, will determine, whether 'tis nobler, and more suitable to the dignity of reason, to suffer the outrages of fortune patiently, or to take arms against them, and by opposing end them, though perhaps with the loss of life. If to die were to sleep, no more, and by a sleep to end the miseries of our nature, such a sleep were devoutly to be wished; but if to sleep in death, be to dream, to retain our powers of sensibility, we must pause to consider, in that sleep of death what dreams may come. This consideration makes calamity so long endured; for who would bear the vexations of life, which might be ended by a bare bodkin, but that he is afraid of something in unknown futurity? This fear it is that gives efficacy to conscience, which, by turning the mind upon this regard, chills the ardour of resolution, checks the vigour of enterprise, and makes the current of desire stagnate in inactivity.*

We may suppose that he would have applied these general observations to his own case, but that he discovered Ophelia as Johnson.

quod non dicite in hoc loco

The pangs of despis'd love, the law's delay,
 The insolence of office, and the spurns
 That patient merit of th' unworthy takes;
 When he himself might his *quietus* make
 With a bare bodkin? who would fardels bear,
 To grone and sweat under a weary life;
 But that the dread of something after death
 (That undiscover'd country, from whose bourne
 No traveller returns) puzzles the will;
 And makes us rather bear those ills we have,
 Than fly to others that we know not of?
 Thus conscience does make cowards of us all:
 And thus the native hue of resolution
 Is sicklied o'er with the pale cast of thought;
 And enterprises of great pitch and moment,
 With this regard their currents turn awry,
 And lose the name of action—Soft you, now!

[Seeing Oph.

The fair Ophelia! Nymph, in thy orisons
 Be all my sins remembered.

Oph. Good my Lord,

How does your honour for this many a day?

Ham. I humbly thank you, well.

Oph. My Lord, I have remembrances of yours,
 That I have longed long to re-deliver:

I pray you, now receive them.

Ham. No, I never gave you aught.

Oph. My honour'd Lord, you know right well you
 did;

And with them words of so sweet breath compos'd,
 As made the things more rich: that perfume lost,
 Take these again; for to the noble mind
 Rich gifts wax poor, when givers prove unkind.
 There, my Lord.

Ham. Ha, ha! are you honest?

Oph. My Lord. —

Ham. Are you fair?

Oph. What means your Lordship?

Ham. That if you be honest and fair, you should
 admit no discourse to your beauty.

Act III. PRINCE of DENMARK. 57

Oph. Could beauty, my Lord, have better commerce than with honesty?

Ham. Ay, truly; for the power of beauty will sooner transform honesty from what it is, to a bawd, than the force of honesty can translate beauty into its likeness. This was sometime a paradox, but now the time gives it proof. — I did love thee once.

Oph. Indeed, my Lord, you made me believe so.

Ham. You should not have believ'd me. For virtue cannot so inoculate our old stock, but we shall relish of it. I lov'd you not.

Oph. I was the more deceiv'd.

Ham. Get thee to a nunnery. Why shouldst thou be a breeder of sinners? I am myself indifferent honest; but yet I could accuse me of such things, that it were better my mother had not born me. I am very proud, revengeful, ambitious, with more offences at my beck, than I have thoughts to put them in name, imagination to give them shape, or time to act them in. What should such fellows as I do crawling between heav'n and earth? we are arrant knaves, believe none of us—Go thy ways to a nunnery—Where's your father?

Oph. At home, my Lord.

Ham. Let the doors be shut upon him, that he may play the fool no where but in's own house. Farewell.

Oph. O help him, you sweet heavens!

Ham. If thou dost marry, I'll give thee this plague for thy dowry. Be thou as chaste as ice, as pure as snow, thou shalt not escape calumny.—Get thee to a nunnery.—Farewell.—Or, if thou wilt needs marry, marry a fool; for wise men know well enough what monsters you make of them—To a nunnery, go—and quickly too: farewell.

Oph. Heav'nly powers, restore him!

Ham. I have heard of your painting too well enough; God has given you one face, and you make yourselves another. You jig, you amble, and you lisp, and nickname God's creatures, and make your wantonness your ignorance. Go to, I'll no more on't; it hath made me

mad. I say, we will have no more marriages. Those that are married already, all but one, shall live; the rest shall keep as they are. To a nunnery, go.

[Exit Hamlet.]

Oph. Oh, what a noble mind is here o'erthrown! The courtier's, scholar's, soldier's, eye, tongue, sword! Th' expectancy and rose of the fair state, — The glass of fashion, and the mould of form, Th' observ'd of all observers, quite, quite down! I am of ladies most deject and wretched, That suck'd the honey of his musick vows: Now see that noble and most sovereign reason, Like sweet bells jangled out of tune, and harsh; That unmatch'd form, and feature of blown youth, Blasted with ecstasy. Oh, woe is me, T' have seen what I have seen, see what I see!

SCENE III.

Enter KING and POLONIUS.

King. Love! his affections do not that way tend; Nor what he spoke, tho' it lack'd form a little, Was not like madness. Something's in his soul, O'er which his melancholy sits on brood; And, I do doubt, the hatch and the disclose Will be some danger, which, how to prevent, I have in quick determination Thus set it down. He shall with speed to England, For the demand of our neglected tribute: Haply the seas, and countries different, With variable objects, shall expel This something-settled matter in his heart; Whereon his brains still beating, puts him thus From fashion of himself. What think you on't?

Pol. It shall do well. But yet do I believe, The origin and commencement of this grief Sprung from neglected love. How now, Ophelia? — You need not tell us what Lord Hamlet said, We heard it all. — My Lord, do as you please;

[Exit Ophelia.]

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But if you hold it fit, after the play
Let his Queen-mother all alone intreat him
To shew his griefs; let her be round with him:
And I'll be plac'd, so please you, in the ear
Of all their conf'rence. If she find him not,
To England send him; or confine him, where
Your wisdom best shall think.

King. It shall be so.
Madness in great ones must not unwatch'd go. [*Exeunt.*]

Enter HAMLET, and two or three of the Players.

Ham. Speak the speech, I pray you, as I pronounced
it to you, trippingly on the tongue. But if you mouth
it, as many of our players do, I had as lieve the town
crier had spoke my lines. And do not saw the air too
much with your hand thus, but use all gently; for in the
very torrent, tempest, and, as I may say, whirlwind of
your passion, you must acquire and beget a temperance
that may give it smoothness. Oh, it offends me to the
soul, to hear a robustious periwig-pated fellow tear a
passion to tatters, to very rags, to split the ears of the
groundlings; who (for the most part) are capable of
nothing, but inexplicable dumb shews and noise: I
could have such a fellow whipp'd for o'erdoing Ter-
magant; it out-herods Herod. Pray you avoid it.

Play. I warrant your Honour.

Ham. Be not too tame neither; but let your own dis-
cretion be your tutor. Suit the action to the word, the
word to the action, with this special observance, that
you o'erstep not the modesty of nature; for any thing
so overdone is from the purpose of playing; whose
end, both at the first and now, was and is, to hold as
twere the mirror up to nature; to shew virtue her own
feature, scorn her own image, and the very age and
body of the time, his form and pressure. Now this
overdone, or come tardy off, tho' it make the unskillful
laugh, cannot but make the judicious grieve: the cen-
sure of one of which must in your allowance o'erweigh
a whole theatre of others. Oh, there be players that

I have seen play, and heard others praise and that highly, (not to speak it profanely), that, neither having the accent of Christian, nor the gate of Christian, Pagan, nor man, have so strutted and bellowed, that I have thought some of nature's journeymen had made them, and not made them well; they imitated humanity so abominably.

Play. I hope we have reform'd that indifferently with us.

Ham. Oh, reform it altogether; and let those that play your clowns, speak no more than is set down for them: for there be of them that will themselves laugh, to set on some quantity of barren spectators to laugh too; though, in the mean time, some necessary question of the play be then to be considered: that's villainous, and shews a most pitiful ambition in the fool that uses it. Go make you ready. *[Exit Players.]*

S C E N E IV.

Enter POLONIUS, ROSINCRANTZ, and GUILDENSTERN.

How now, my Lord? will the King hear this piece of work?

Pol. And the Queen too, and that presently.

Ham. Bid the Players make haste. *[Exit Pol.]* Will you two help to hasten them?

Both. We will, my Lord. *[Exit.]*

Ham. What, ho, Horatio!

Enter HORATIO to HAMLET.

Hor. Here, sweet Lord, at your service.

Ham. Horatio, thou art e'en as just a man; As e'er my conversation cop'd withal.

Hor. Oh, my dear Lord,——

Ham. Nay, do not think I flatter: For what advancement may I hope from thee, That no revenue hast, but thy good spirits,

ACT III. PRINCE of DENMARK. 61

To feed and clothe thee? Should the poor be flatter'd?
 No, let the candied tongue lick absurd pomp,
 And crook the pregnant hinges of the knee,
 Where thrift may follow fawning. Dost thou hear?
 Since my dear soul was mistress of her choice,
 And could of men distinguish, her election
 Hath seal'd thee for herself. For thou hast been
 As one, in suffering all, that suffers nothing:
 A man that Fortune's buffets and rewards
 Hast ta'en with equal thanks. And bless'd are those,
 Whose blood and judgment are so well co-mingled,
 That they are not a pipe for Fortune's finger,
 To sound what stop she please. Give me that man
 That is not Passion's slave, and I will wear him
 In my heart's core; ay, in my heart of heart,
 As I do thee. — Something too much of this. —
 There is a play to-night before the King,
 One scene of it comes near the circumstance
 Which I have told thee, of my father's death.
 I pr'ythee, when thou seest that act a-foot,
 Ev'n with the very comment of thy soul
 Observe mine uncle: if his occult guilt
 Do not itself unkennel in one speech,
 It is a damned ghost that we have seen;
 And my imaginations are as foul
 As Vulcan's stithy. Give him heedful note;
 For I mine eyes will rivet to his face;
 And, after, we will both our judgments join,
 In censure of his seeming.

Hor. Well, my Lord.

If he steal aught the whilst this play is playing,
 And 'scape detecting, I will pay the theft.

S C E N E V.

Enter KING, QUEEN, POLONIUS, OPHELIA, ROSINCRANTZ, GUILDENSTERN, and other Lords attendant, with a Guard carrying torches. Danish march. Sound a flourish.

Ham. They're coming to the play; I must be idle. Get you a place.

King. How fares our cousin Hamlet?

Ham. Excellent, i'faith, of the cameleon's dish: eat the air, promise-cramm'd: you cannot feed capons so.

King. I have nothing with this answer, Hamlet; these words are not mine.

Ham. No, nor mine. — Now, my Lord; you play'd once i' th' univarsity, you say? *[To Polonius.]*

Pol. That I did, my Lord, and was accounted a good actor.

Ham. And what did you enact?

Pol. I did enact Julius Cæsar; I was kill'd i' th' Capitol: Brutus kill'd me.

Ham. It was a brute part of him, to kill so capital a calf there. Be the players ready?

Ros. Ay, my Lord, they stay upon your patience.

Queen. Come hither, my dear Hamlet, sit by me.

Ham. No, good mother, here's mettle more attractive.

Pol. Oh, ho! do you mark that?

Ham. Lady, shall I ly in your lap?

[Lying down at Ophelia's feet.]

Oph. No, my Lord.

Ham. I mean, my head upon your lap?

Oph. Ay, my Lord.

Ham. Do you think I meant country-matters?

Oph. I think nothing, my Lord.

Ham. That's a fair thought, to ly between a maid's legs.

Oph. What is, my Lord?

Ham. Nothing.

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Oph. You are merry, my Lord.

Ham. Who, I?

Oph. Ay, my good Lord.

Ham. Oh God! your only jig-maker; what should a man do but be merry? For, look you, how chearfully my mother looks, and my father dy'd within these two hours.

Oph. Nay, 'tis two months, my Lord.

Ham. So long? nay, then let the devil wear black, 'fore I'll have a suit of sable. Oh Heavens! die two months ago, and not forgotten yet! then there's hope a great man's memory may outlive his life half a year; but, by'r Lady, he must build churches then; or else shall he suffer not thinking on, with the hobby horse; whose epitaph is, *For oh, for oh, the hobby-horse is forgot.*

S C E N E VI.

Hautboys play. The dumb shew enters.

Enter a Duke and Duchess, with regal coronets, very lovingly; the Duchess embracing him, and he her. She kneels; he takes her up, and declines his head upon her neck; he lays him down upon a bank of flowers; she seeing him asleep, leaves him. Anon comes in a fellow, takes off his crown, kisses it, and pours poison in the Duke's ears, and exit. The Duchess returns, finds the Duke dead, and makes passionate action. The poisoner, with some two or three mutes, comes in again, seeming to lament with her. The dead body is carried away. The poisoner woos the Duchess with gifts; she seems loth and unwilling a while, but in the end accepts his love. [Exeunt.]

Oph. What means this, my Lord?

Ham. Marry, this is miching Malhechor; it means mischief.

Oph. Belike this shew imports the argument of the play?

Enter Prologue.

Ham. We shall know by this fellow: the players cannot keep counsel; they'll tell all.

Oph. Will he tell us what this show meant?

Ham. Ay, or any show that you'll shew him. Be not you ashamed to shew, he'll not shame to tell you what it means.

Oph. You are naught, you are naught, I'll mark the play.

Prolog. For us, and for our tragedy,
Here stooping to your clemency,
We beg your hearing patiently.

Ham. Is this a prologue, or the posie of a ring?

Oph. 'Tis brief, my Lord.

Ham. As woman's love.

Enter Duke, and Duchesse, Players.

Duke. Full thirty times hath Phoebus' car gone round
Neptune's salt wash, and Tellus' orb'd ground;
And thirty dozen moons with borrowed sheen
About the world have times twelve thirty been,
Since love our hearts, and Hymen did our hands,
Unite commutual, in most sacred bands.

Duch. So many journeys may the sun and moon
Make us again count o'er ere love be done.
But woe is me you are so sick of late,
So far from cheer, and from your former state,
That I distrust you: yet though I distrust,
Discomfort you, my Lord, it nothing must.
For women fear too much, ev'n as they love.
And women's fear and love hold quantity;
'Tis either none, or in extremity.

Now what my love is, proof hath made you know;
And as my love is siz'd, my fear is so.
Where love is great, the smallest doubts are fear;
Where little fears grow great, great love grows there.

Duke. 'Faith, I must leave thee, love, and shortly too:

ACT III. PRINCE of DENMARK. 65

My operant powers their functions leave to do,
And thou shalt live in this fair world behind,
Honour'd, belov'd; and haply one as kind
For husband shalt thou—

Duch. Oh, confound the rest!
Such love must needs be treason in my breast:
In second husband let me be accus'd!
None wed the second, but who kill the first.

Ham. Wormwood, wormwood.

Duch. The instances that second marriage move,
Are base respects of thrift, but none of love.
A second time I kill my husband dead,
When second husband kisses me in bed.

Duke. I do believe you think what now you speak;
But what we do determine, oft we break;
Purpose is but the slave to memory,
Of violent birth, but poor validity:
Which now, like fruits unripe, sticks on the tree;
But fall unshaken, when they mellow be.
Most necessary 'tis that we forget
To pay ourselves what to ourselves is debt:
What to ourselves in passion we propose,
The passion ending, doth the purpose lose;
The violence of either grief or joy,
Their own enactors with themselves destroy,
Where joy most revels, grief doth most lament;
Grief joys, joy grieves, on slender accident.
This world is not for ay; nor 'tis not strange,
That ev'n our loves should with our fortunes change:
For 'tis a question left us yet to prove,
Whether Love leads Fortune, or else Fortune Love;
The great man down, you mark, his fav'rite flies;
The poor advanc'd, makes friends of enemies;
And hitherto doth Love on Fortune tend,
For who not needs, shall never lack a friend;
And who in want a hollow friend doth try,
Directly seasons him his enemy.
But orderly to end where I begun,
Our wills and fates do so contrary run,

That our devices still are overthrown;
Our thoughts are ours, their ends none of our own.
Think still, thou wilt no second husband wed;
But die thy thoughts when thy first lord is dead.

Duch. Nor earth to me give food, nor heaven light!
Sport and repose lock from me day and night!
To desperation turn my trust and hope!
An anchor's cheer in prison be my scope!
Each opposite that blanks the face of joy,
Meet what I would have well, and it destroy!
Both here, and hence, pursue me lasting strife!
If, once a widow, e'er I be a wife.

Ham. If she should break it now——

Duke. 'Tis deeply sworn; sweet, leave me here a while;

My spirits grow dull, and fain I would beguile
The tedious day with sleep. *[Sleeps.]*

Duch. Sleep rock thy brain,
And never come mischance between us twain! *[Exit.]*

Ham. Madam, how like you this play?

Queen. The lady protests too much, methinks.

Ham. Oh, but she'll keep her word.

King. Have you heard the argument, is there no offence in't?

Ham. No, no, they do but jest, poison in jest, no offence i' th' world.

King. What do you call the play?

Ham. The *Mouse-trap*;——Marry, how? Tropically. This play is the image of a murder done in Vienna; Gonzago is the Duke's name, his wife's Baptista; you shall see anon 'tis a knavish piece of work; but what o' that? your Majesty, and we that have free souls, it touches us not; let the gall'd jade winch, our withers are unwrung.

Enter LUCIANUS.

This is one Lucianus, nephew to the Duke.

Oph. You are as good as a chorus, my Lord.

Ham. I could interpret between you and your love, if I could see the puppets dallying.

ACT III. PRINCE of DENMARK. 67

Oph. You are keen, my Lord, you are keen.

Ham. It would cost you a groaning to take off my edge.

Oph. Still better and worse.

Ham. So you must take your husbands.

Begin, murderer. — Leave thy damnable faces, and begin.

Come, the croaking raven doth bellow for revenge.

Luc. Though's black, hands apt, drugs fit, and time agreeing ;

Confed'rate season, and no creature seeing ;

Thou mixture rank, of midnight weeds collected,

With Hecate's bane thrice blasted, thrice infected,

Thy natural magic, and dire property,

On wholesome life usurp immediately.

[Pours the poison into his ears]

Ham. He poisons him i' th' garden for's estate ; his name's Gonzago ; the story is extant, and writ in choice Italian. You shall see anon how the murderer gets the love of Gonzago's wife.

Oph. The King rises.

Ham. What, frightened with false fire !

Queen. How fares my Lord ?

Pol. Give o'er the play.

King. Give me some light. Away !

All. Lights, lights, lights ! *[Exeunt.]*

S C E N E VII.

Manent HAMLET and HORATIO.

Ham. Why, let the stricken deer go weep,

The hart ungalled play ;

For some must watch, whilst some must sleep ;

So runs the world away.

Would not this, Sir, and a forest of feathers, (if the rest of my fortunes turn Turk with me), with two provincial roses on my rayed shoes, get me a fellowship in a cry of players, Sir ?

Hor. Half a share.

Ham. A whole one, I.

For thou dost know, oh Damon dear,

This realm dismantled was
Of Jove himself, and now reigns here

A very, very—peacock.

Hor. You might have rhim'd.

Ham. Oh, good Horatio, I'll take the Ghost's word
for a thousand pounds. Didst perceive?

Hor. Very well, my Lord.

Ham. Upon the talk of the poisoning?

Hor. I did very well note him.

Enter ROSINCRANTZ and GUILDENSTERN.

Ham. Oh, ha! come, some music: come, the recorders.

For if the King like not the comedy;

Why, then, belike, he likes it not, perdy.

Come, some music.

Guil. Good my Lord, vouchsafe me a word with you.

Ham. Sir, a whole history.

Guil. The King, Sir——

Ham. Ay, Sir, what of him?

Guil. Is, in his retirement, marvellous distemper'd—

Ham. With drink, Sir?

Guil. No, my Lord, with choler.

Ham. Your wisdom shall shew itself more rich, to
signify this to his doctor: for, for me to put him to
his purgation, would perhaps plunge him into more
choler.

Guil. Good my Lord, put your discourse into some
frame, and start not so widely from my affair.

Ham. I am tame, Sir;—pronounce.

Guil. The Queen your mother, in most great affliction of spirit, hath sent me to you.

Ham. You are welcome.

Guil. Nay, good my Lord, this courtesy is not of the
right breed. If it shall please you to make me a whole-
some answer, I will do your mother's commandment;

ACT III. PRINCE OF DENMARK. 69

if not, your pardon, and my return, shall be the end of my business.

Ham. Sir, I cannot.

Guil. What, my Lord?

Ham. Make you a wholesome answer: my wit's diseased. But, Sir, such answer as I can make you shall command; or, rather, as you say, my mother—therefore no more but to the matter—my mother, you say—

Ros. Then, thus she says: your behaviour hath struck her into amazement, and admiration.

Ham. O wonderful son, that can so astonish a mother! But there is no sequel at the heels of this mother's admiration?

Ros. She desires to speak with you in her closet ere you go to bed.

Ham. We shall obey, were she ten times our mother. Have you any further trade with us?

Ros. My Lord, you did once love me.

Ham. So do I still, by these pickers and stealers.

Ros. Good my Lord, what is your cause of distemper? you do surely bar the door of your own liberty, if you deny your griefs to your friend.

Ham. Sir, I lack advancement.

Ros. How can that be, when you have the voice of the King himself for your succession in Denmark?

Ham. Ay, but *while the grass grows*—the proverb is something musty.

Enter one, with a Recorder.

Oh, the Recorders; let me see one. To withdraw with you—why do you go about to recover the wind of me, as if you would drive me into a toil?

Guil. Oh my Lord, if my duty be too bold, my love is too unmannerly.

Ham. I do not well understand that. Will you play upon this pipe?

Guil. My Lord, I cannot.

Ham. I pray you.

Guil. Believe me, I cannot.

Ham. I do beseech you.

Guil. I know no touch of it, my Lord.

Ham. 'Tis as easy as lying; govern these ventiges with your fingers and thumb; give it breath with your mouth, and it will discourse most eloquent music. Look you, these are the stops.

Guil. But these cannot I command to any utterance of harmony; I have not the skill.

Ham. Why, look you now, how unworthy a thing you make of me; you would play upon me, you would seem to know my stops; you would pluck out the heart of my mystery; you would sound me from my lowest note, to the top of my compass; and there is much music, excellent voice, in this little organ, yet cannot you make it speak. Why, do you think that I am easier to be play'd on than a pipe? call me what instrument you will, though you can fret me, you cannot play upon me.—God bless you, Sir.

Enter POLONIUS.

Pol. My Lord, the Queen would speak with you, and presently.

Ham. Do you see yonder cloud that's almost in shape of a camel?

Pol. By the mass, and 'tis like a camel indeed.

Ham. Methinks it is like an ouzle.

Pol. It is black like an ouzle.

Ham. Or like a whale?

Pol. Very like a whale.

Ham. Then will I come to my mother by and by.—They fool me to the top of my bent.—I will come by and by.

Pol. I will say so.

Ham. By and by is easily said. Leave me, friends.

[*Exit*]

'Tis now the very witching time of night,
When church-yards yawn, and hell itself breathes out
Contagion to this world. Now could I drink hot blood,

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ACT III. PRINCE of DENMARK. 71

And do such business as the better day
Would quake to look on. Soft, now to my mother—
O heart, lose not thy nature; let not ever
The soul of Nero enter this firm bosom;
Let me be cruel, not unnatural.
I will speak daggers to her, but use none.
My tongue and soul in this be hypocrites;
How in my words soever she be shent,
To give them seals never my soul consent! [Exit.

S C E N E VIII.

Enter KING, ROSINCRANTZ, and GUILDENSTERN.

King. I like him not, nor stands it safe with us
To let his madness range. Therefore prepare you;
I your commission forthwith will dispatch,
And he to England shall along with you.
The terms of our estate may not endure
Hazard so near us, as doth hourly grow
Out of his lunacies.

Guil. We will provide ourselves;
Most holy and religious fear it is,
To keep these many many bodies safe,
That live and feed upon your Majesty.

Ros. The single and peculiar life is bound,
With all the strength and armour of the mind,
To keep itself from 'noyance; but much more,
That spirit on whose weal depends and rests
The lives of many. The cease of Majesty
Dies not alone, but, like a gulph, doth draw
What's near it with it. 'Tis a massy wheel
Fix'd on the summit of the highest mount,
To whose huge spokes ten thousand lesser things
Are mortiz'd and adjoin'd; which, when it falls,
Each small annexment, petty consequence,
Attends the boist'rous ruin. Ne'er alone
Did the King sigh, but with a general groan.

King. Arm you, I pray you, to this speedy voyage;
For we will fetters put upon this fear,
Which now goes too free-footed.

Both. We will haste us. *[Exeunt Gentlemen.]*

Enter POLONIUS.

Pol. My Lord, he's going to his mother's closet;
Behind the arras I'll convey myself
To hear the process; I'll warrant she'll tax him home.
And, as you said, and wisely was it said,
'Tis meet that some more audience than a mother
(Since Nature makes them partial) should o'erhear
The speech, of 'vantage. Fare you well, my Liege;
I'll call upon you ere you go to bed,
And tell you what I know. *[Exit.]*

King. Thanks, dear my Lord.

Oh! my offence is rank, it smells to Heav'n;
It hath the primal, eldest curse upon't;
A brother's murder.——Pray I cannot:
Though inclination be as sharp as will,
My stronger guilt defeats my strong intent;
And, like a man to double business bound,
I stand in pause where I shall first begin,
And both neglect. What if this cursed hand
Were thicker than itself with brother's blood?
Is there not rain enough in the sweet heavens
To wash it white as snow? whereto serves mercy,
But to confront the visage of offence?
And what's in prayer, but this twofold force,
To be forestalled ere we come to fall,
Or pardon'd being down? Then I'll look up;
My fault is past.——But oh, what form of prayer
Can serve my turn? Forgive me my foul murder!——
That cannot be, since I am still possess'd
Of those effects for which I did the murder,
My crown, mine own ambition, and my Queen.
May one be pardon'd, and retain th' offence?
In the corrupted currents of this world,
Offence's gilded band may shove by justice;

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ACT III. PRINCE of DENMARK. 73

And oft 'tis seen, the wicked prize itself
Buys out the law. But 'tis not so above.
There is no shuffling; there the action lies
In his true nature, and we ourselves compell'd,
Ev'n to the teeth and forehead of our faults,
To give in evidence. What then? what rests?
Try what repentance can: what can it not?
Yet what can it, when one cannot repent?
Oh wretched state! oh bosom black as death!
Oh limed soul, that, struggling to be free,
Art more engag'd! Help, angels! make assay!
Bow, stubborn knees; and heart, with strings of steel,
Be soft as sinews of the new-born babe!
All may be well. *[The King retires, and kneels.]*

S C E N E IX.

Enter HAMLET.

Ham. Now might I do it pat, now he is praying,
And now I'll do't—and so he goes to heav'n—
And so am I reveng'd? that would be scann'd;
A villain kills my father, and for that
I, his sole son, do this same villain send
To heav'n—O, this is hire and salary, not revenge.
He took my father grossly, full of bread,
With all his crimes broad blown, flush as May;
And now his audit stands, who knows, save Heav'n?
But in our circumstance and course of thought,
'Tis heavy with him. Am I then reveng'd,
To take him in the purging of his soul,
When he is fit and season'd for his passage?
Up, sword, and know thou a more horrid bent;
When he is drunk, asleep, or in his rage,
Or in th' incestuous pleasure of his bed;
At gaming, swearing, or about some act
That has no relish of salvation in't;
Then trip him, that his heels may kick at heav'n;
And that his soul may be as damn'd and black
As hell, whereto it goes. My mother stays!

This physic but prolongs thy sickly days. *[Exit.]*

The King rises, and comes forward.

King. My words fly up, my thoughts remain below:
Words without thoughts never to heaven go. *[Exit.]*

SCENE X.

Changes to the Queen's Apartment.

Enter QUEEN and POLONIUS.

Pol. He will come straight; look you lay home to him;
Tell him his pranks have been too broad to bear with;
And that your Grace hath screen'd, and stood between
Much heat and him. I'll s'conce me even here;
Pray you be round with him.

Ham. within.] Mother, mother, mother——

Queen. I'll warrant you, fear me not.

Withdraw, I hear him coming.

[Polonius hides himself behind the arras.]

Enter HAMLET.

Ham. Now, mother, what's the matter?

Queen. Hamlet, thou hast thy father much offended.

Ham. Mother, you have my father much offended.

Queen. Come, come, you answer with an idle tongue.

Ham. Go, go, you question with a wicked tongue.

Queen. Why, how now, Hamlet?

Ham. What's the matter now?

Queen. Have you forgot me?

Ham. No, by the rood, not so;

You are the Queen, your husband's brother's wife;

But 'would you were not so) you are my mother.

Queen. Nay, then I'll set those to you that can speak.

Ham. Come, come, and sit you down; you shall not
budge:

You go not, till I set you up a glass,

Where you may see the inmost part of you.

Queen. What wilt thou do? thou wilt not murder me?
Help, ho!

III. 10 V

ACT III. PRINCE of DENMARK. 75

Pol. What ho, help! *[To move him. Behind the arras.]*

Ham. How now; a rat? dead for a ducat, dead.

Pol. Oh, I am slain. *[Hamlet kills Polonius.]*

Queen. Oh me, what hast thou done?

Ham. Nay, I know none: is it the King?

Queen. Oh, what a rash and bloody deed is this!

Ham. A bloody deed; almost as bad, good mother, T
As kill a king, and marry with his brother.

Queen. As kill a king?

Ham. Ay, Lady, 'twas my word. *[To Polonius.]*
Thou wretched, rash, intruding fool, farewell;
I took thee for thy better; take thy fortune;

Thou find'st, to be too busy, is some danger:
Leave wringing of your hands; peace, sit you down,
And let me wring your heart, for so I shall,
If it be made of penetrable stuff;
If damned custom have not braz'd it so,
That it is proof and bulwark against sense.

Queen. What have I done; that thou dar'st wag thy

Tongue in such a dangerous sort?
In noise so rude against me?

Ham. Such an act,
That blurs the grace and blush of modesty;
Calls virtue hypocrite; takes off the rose
From the fair forehead of an innocent love,
And sets a blister there; makes marriage-vows
As false as dicers' oaths. Oh, such a deed,
As from the body of contraction plucks
The very soul, and sweet religion makes
A rhapsody of words: Heav'n's face doth glow
O'er this solidity and compound mass,
With tristful visage; and, as 'gainst the doom,
Is thought-sick at the act.

Queen. Ah me! what act?

Ham. That roars so loud it thunders to the Indies.
Look here upon this picture, and on this,
The counterfeits presentment of two brothers;
See what a grace was seated on this brow;

Hyperion's curls; the front of Jove himself;
 An eye like Mars, to threaten or command;
 A station, like the herald Mercury
 New lighted on a heaven-killing hill;
 A combination, and a form indeed,
 Where every god did seem to set his seal,
 To give the world assurance of a man:
 This was your husband.—Look you now what follows;
 Here is your husband, like a mildew'd ear,
 Blasting his wholesome brother. Have you eyes?
 Could you on this fair mountain leave to feed,
 And batten on this moor? ha! have you eyes?
 You cannot call it love; for, at your age,
 The hey-day in the blood is tame, 'tis humble,
 And waits upon the judgment; and what judgment
 Would step from this to this? Sense, sure, you have,
 Else could you not have notion: but, sure, that sense
 Is apoplex'd: for madness would not err;
 Nor sense to ecstasy was ne'er so thrall'd,
 But it reserv'd some quantity of choice
 To serve in such a diff'rence.—What devil was't
 That thus hath cozen'd you at hoodman blind?
 Eyes without feeling, feeling without sight,
 Ears without hands or eyes, smelling fans all,
 Or but a sickly part of one true sense
 Could not so mope.—O shame! where is thy blush?
 O shame! where is thy blush? rebellious hell,
 If thou canst mutiny in a matron's bones;
 To flaming youth let virtue be as wax,
 And melt in her own fire. Proclaim no shame,
 When the compulsive ardour gives the charge;
 Since frost itself as actively doth burn,
 And reason panders will.

Queen. O Hamlet, speak no more.
 Thou turn'st mine eyes into my very soul;
 And there I see such black and grained spots,
 As will not leave their tinct.

Ham. Nay, but to live
 In the rank sweat of an incestuous bed,

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ACT III. PRINCE OF DENMARK.

Stew'd in corruption, honeying and making love
Over the nasty sty —

Queen. Oh, speak no more;
These words like daggers enter in mine ears.
No more, sweet Hamlet.

Ham. A murderer and a villain!
A slave, that is not twentieth part the tithe
Of your precedent lord. A vice of kings;
A cutpurse of the empire and the rule,
That from a shelf the precious diadem stole,
And put it in his pocket.

Queen. No more.

Enter GHOST.

Ham. A king of fables and patches —
Save me! and hover o'er me with your wings,
[Starting up]
You heav'nly guards! — What would your gracious
figure?

Queen. Alas, he's mad —

Ham. Do you not come your tardy son to chide,
That laps'd in time and passion, lets go by
Th' important acting of your dread command?
O say!

Ghost. Do not forget: this visitation
Is but to whet thy almost blunted purpose.
But look, amazement on thy mother sits;
O step between her and her fighting soul:
Conceit an weakest bodies strongest works.
Speak to her, Hamlet.

Ham. How is't with you, Lady?

Queen. Alas, how is't with you?
That thus you bend your eye on vacancy,
And with th' incorporal air do hold discourse;
Forth at your eyes your spirits wildly peep;
And, as the sleeping soldiers in th' alarm,
Your bedded hairs, like life in excrements,
Start up, and stand on end. O gentle son,
Upon the heat and flame of your disemper —

Sprinkle cool patience. Whereon do you look?

Ham. On him! on him!—look you how pale he glares!

His form and cause conjoin'd, preaching to stones,
Would make them capable. Do not look on me,
Lest with this piteous action you convert

My stern effects; then what I have to do,
Will want true colour; tears, perchance, for blood.

Queen. To whom do you speak this?

Ham. Do you see nothing there?

[*Pointing to the Ghost.*]

Queen. Nothing at all; yet all that is, I see.

Ham. Nor did you nothing hear?

Queen. No, nothing but ourselves.

Ham. Why, look you there! look how it steals away!
My father in his habit as he liv'd!
Look where he goes ev'n now, out at the portal.

[*Exit Ghost.*]

Queen. This is the very coinage of your brain,
This bodiless creation ecstasy
Is very cunning in.

Ham. What ecstasy?

My pulse, as your's, doth temperately keep time,
And makes as healthful music. 'Tis not madness
That I have utter'd; bring me to the test;
And I the matter will re-word; which madness
Would gambol from. Mother, for love of grace,
Lay not that flattering unction to your soul,
That not your trespass, but my madness speaks.
It will but skin and film the ulcerous place;
Whilst rank corruption, mining all within,
Infects unseen. Confess yourself to Heav'n;
Repent what's past, avoid what is to come;
And do not spread the compost on the weeds
To make them ranker. Forgive me this my virtue;
For in the fatness of these purpy times,
Virtue itself of vice must pardon beg,
Yea, couth, and woode, for leave to do it good.

Queen. Oh Hamlet! thou hast cleft my heart in twain.

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ACT III. PRINCE OF DENMARK. 79

Ham. O, throw away the worser part of it,
And live the purer with the other half.
Good night; but go not to mine uncle's bed.
Assume a virtue, if you have it not.
That monster Custom, who all sense doth eat
Of habits evil, is angel yet in this;
That to the use of actions fair and good
He likewise gives a frock, or livery,
That aptly is put on: refrain to-night;
And that shall lend a kind of easiness
To the next abstinence; the next more easy;
For use can almost change the stamp of nature,
And master ev'n the devil, or throw him out
With wondrous potency. Once more, good night!
And when you are desirous to be blest'd,
I'll blessing beg of you. For this same lord,

[Pointing to Polonius.]

I do repent: but Heav'n hath pleas'd it so,
To punish me with this, and this with me,
That I must be their scourge and minister.
I will bestow him, and will answer well
The death I gave him; so, again, good night!
I must be cruel, only to be kind;
Thus bad begins, and worse remains behind.

Queen. What shall I do?

Ham. Not this by no means that I bid you do.
Let the bloat King tempt you again to-bed;
Pinch wanton on your cheek; call you his mouse;
And let him, for a pair of reechy kisses,
Or padding in your neck with his damn'd fingers,
Make you to revel all this matter out,
That I essentially am not in madness,
But mad in craft. 'Twere good you let him know.
For who that's but a queen, fair, sober, wife,
Would from a paddock, from a bat, a gibbe,
Such dear concernings hide? who would do so?
No, in despite of sense and secrecy,
Unpeg the basket on the house's top,
Let the birds fly, and, like the famous ape,
To try conclusions, in the basket creep;

And break your own neck down.

Queen. Be thou assur'd, if words be made of breath,
And breath of life, I have no life to breathe
What thou hast said to me.

Ham. I must to England, you know that?

Queen. Alack, I had forgot; 'tis so concluded on.

Ham. There's letters seal'd, and my two school-
fellows,

(Whom I will trust, as I will adders fang'd),
They bear the mandate; they must sweep my way,
And marshal me to knavery: let it work—

For 'tis the sport, to have the engineer
Hoist with his own petar: and 't shall go hard,

But I will delve one yard below their mines,
And blow them at the moon. O, 'tis most sweet;

When in one line two crafts directly meet!
This man shall set me packing;—

I'll lug the guts into the neighbour room.

Mother, good night.—Indeed this counsellor

Is now most still, most secret, and most grave,
Who was in life a foolish prating knave.

Come, Sir, to draw toward an end with you.

Good night, mother. [*Exit Hamlet, dragging in Polonius.*]

A C T IV. S C E N E I.

A royal Apartment.

Enter KING and QUEEN, with ROSINCRANTZ and
GUILDENSTERN.

KING.

Here's matter in these sighs; these profound heaves
You must translate; 'tis fit we understand them.

Where is your son?

Queen. Bestow this place on us a little while.

[*To Rosincrantz and Guildenstern, who go out.*]

Ah, my good Lord, what have I seen to-night?

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PRINCE OF DENMARK.
ACT IV. PRINCE OF DENMARK. 81

King. What, Gertrude? How does Hamlet?

Queen. Mad as the seas and wind, when both contend
 Which is the mightier; in his lawless fit,
 Behind the arras hearing something stir,
 He whips his rapier out, and cries, A rat!
 And in this brainish apprehension, kills
 The unseen good old man.

King. O heavy deed!

It had been so with us, had we been there:
 His liberty is full of threats to all,
 To you yourself, to us, to every one.
 Alas! how shall this bloody deed be answer'd?
 It will be laid to us, whose providence
 Should have kept short, restrain'd, and out of haunt,
 This mad young man. But so much was our love,
 We would not understand what was most fit;
 But, like the owner of a foul disease,
 To keep it from divulging, let it feed
 Ev'n on the pith of life. Where is he gone?

Queen. To draw apart the body he hath kill'd;
 O'er whom his very madness, like some ore
 Among a mineral of metals base,
 Shews itself pure. He weeps for what is done.

King. O Gertrude, come away:
 The sun no sooner shall the mountains touch,
 But we will ship him hence; and this vile deed
 We must, with all our majesty and skill,
 Both countenance and excuse. Ho! Guildenstern!

Enter ROSINCRANTZ and GUILDENSTERN.

Friends both, go join you with some further aid:
 Hamlet in madness hath Polonius slain,
 And from his mother's closet hath he dragg'd him.
 Go, seek him out, speak fair, and bring the body
 Into the chapel. Pray you, haste in this.

[Exit Rosincrantz and Guildenstern.]
 Come, Gertrude, we'll call up our wisest friends,
 And let them know both what we mean to do,
 And what's untimely done. For, haply, slander

(Whose whisper o'er the world's diameter,
As level as the cannon to its blank,
Transports its poison'd shot) may miss our name,
And hit the woundless air — O, come away;
My soul is full of discord and dismay. *[Exit]*

S C E N E II

Enter HAMLET.

Ham. Safely stowed. — *[Gentlemen within.]* Hamlet! Lord Hamlet!

Ham. What noise? who calls on Hamlet?
Oh, here they come.

Enter ROSINCRANTZ and GUILDENSTERN.

Ros. What have you done, my Lord, with the dead
body?

Ham. Compounded it with dust, whereto 'tis kin.

Ros. Tell us where 'tis, that we may take it thence,
And bear it to the chapel.

Ham. Do not believe it.

Ros. Believe what?

Ham. That I can keep your counsel, and not mine
own. Besides, to be demanded of a sponge, what re-
plication should be made by the son of a King?

Ros. Take you me for a sponge, my Lord?

Ham. Ay, Sir, that sokes up the King's countenance,
his rewards, his authorities; but such officers do the
King best service in the end; he keeps them, like an
ape, in the corner of his jaw; first mouth'd, to be last
swallow'd: when he needs what you have glean'd, it is
but squeezing you, and, sponge, you shall be dry again.

Ros. I understand you not, my Lord.

Ham. I am glad of it; a knavish speech sleeps in a
foolish ear.

Ros. My Lord, you must tell us where the body is,
and go with us to the King.

Ham. The body is with the King, but the King is
not with the body. The King is a thing —

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ACT IV. PRINCE of DENMARK. 83

Gail. A thing, my Lord?

Ham. Of nothing: bring me to him; hide fox, and all after. *[Exit.]*

S C E N E III.

Enter KING.

King. I've sent to seek him, and to find the body.
How dang'rous is it, that this man goes loose!
Yet must we not put the strong law on him;
He's lov'd of the distracted multitude,
Who like not in their judgment, but their eyes;
And where 'tis so, th' offender's scourge is weigh'd,
But never the offence. To bear all smooth,
This sudden sending him away must seem
Deliberate pause: diseases, desp'rate grown,
By desperate appliance are relieved,
Or not at all.

Enter ROSINCRANTZ.

How now? what hath befall'n?

Ros. Where the dead body is bestow'd, my Lord,
We cannot get from him.

King. But where is he?

Ros. Without, my Lord, guarded to know your pleasure.

King. Bring him before us.

Ros. Ho, Guildenstern! bring in my Lord.

Enter HAMLET and GUILDENSTERN.

King. Now, Hamlet, where's Polonius?

Ham. At supper.

King. At supper? where?

Ham. Not where he eats, but where he is eaten; a certain convocation of politic worms are e'en at him. Your worm is your only Emperor for diet. We fat all creatures else to fat us, and we fat ourselves for maggots. Your fat king and your lean beggar is but variable service, two dishes but to one table; that's the end.

King. Alas, alas!

Ham. A man may fish with the worm that hath eat of a king, eat of the fish that hath fed of that worm.

King. What dost thou mean by this?

Ham. Nothing, but to shew you how a king may go a progress through the guts of a beggar.

King. Where is Polonius?

Ham. In heav'n, send thither to see. If your messenger find him not there, seek him i' th' other place yourself. But, indeed, if you find him not within this month, you shall nose him as you go up the stairs into the lobby.

King. Go seek him there.

Ham. He will stay till ye come.

King. Hamlet, this deed, for thine especial safety, (Which we do tender, as we dearly grieve For that which thou hast done), must send thee hence With fiery quickness; therefore prepare thyself; The bark is ready, and the wind at help, Th' associates tend, and every thing is bent For England.

Ham. For England?

King. Ay, Hamlet.

Ham. Good.

King. So it is, if thou knew'st our purposes.

Ham. I see a cherub that sees them; but come, for England! Farewell, dear mother.

King. Thy loving father, Hamlet.

Ham. My mother: Father and Mother is man and wife; man and wife is one flesh, and so my mother. Come, for England. [Exit.]

King. Follow him at foot; tempt him with speed aboard;

Delay it not, I'll have him hence to-night.

Away, for every thing is seal'd and done

That else leans on th' affair; pray you make haste.

[Exit Rosinchantz and Guildenstern.]

And, England! if my love thou hold'st at aught,
As my great power thereof may give thee sense,
Since yet thy cicatrice looks raw and red

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ACT IV. PRINCE of DENMARK. 85

After the Danish sword, and thy free awe
Pays homage to us ; thou may'st not coldly set
Our sovereign process, which imports at full,
By letters congruing to that effect,
The present death of Hamlet. Do it, England :
For like the hedic in my blood he rages,
And thou must cure me ; till I know 'tis done,
Howe'er my haps, my joys will ne'er begin. *[Exit.*

S C E N E IV.

A Camp on the frontiers of Denmark.

Enter FORTINBRAS with an army.

For. Go, Captain, from me greet the Danish King ;
Tell him, that, by his licence, Fortinbras
Claims the conveyance of a promis'd march
Over his realm. You know the rendezvous.
If that his Majesty would aught with us,
We shall express our duty in his eye,
And let him know so.

Capt. I will do't, my Lord.

For. Go softly on. *[Exit Fortinbras with the army.]*

*Enter HAMLET, ROSINCRANTZ, GUILDEN-
STERN, &c.*

Ham. Good Sir, whose powers are these ?

Capt. They are of Norway, Sir.

Ham. How purpos'd, Sir, I pray you ?

Capt. Against some part of Poland.

Ham. Who commands them, Sir ?

Capt. The nephew of old Norway, Fortinbras.

Ham. Goes it against the main of Poland, Sir,
Or for some frontier ?

Capt. Truly to speak it, and with no addition,
We go to gain a little patch of ground,
That hath in it no profit but the name.

To pay five ducats—five, I would not farm it ;
Nor will it yield to Norway, or the Pole,
A ranker rate, should it be sold in fee.

Ham. Why, then the Polack never will defend it,

Cap. Yes, 'tis already garrison'd.

Ham. Two thousand souls, and twenty thousand ducats,
Will not debate the question of this straw;
This is th' imposthume of much wealth and peace,
That inward breaks, and shews no cause without
Why the man dies. I humbly thank you, Sir.

Cap. God b' w' ye, Sir.

Ros. Will't please you go, my Lord?

Ham. I'll be with you strait, go a little before. [*Exit.*]

Manet HAMLET.

How all occasions do inform against me,
And spur my dull revenge! What is a man,
If his chief good and market of his time
Be but to sleep and feed? a beast, no more.
Sure he that made us with such large discourse,
Looking before and after, gave us not
That capability and godlike reason
To rust in us unus'd. Now, whether it be
Bestial oblivion, or some craven scruple
Of thinking too precisely on th' event,
(A thought, which, quarter'd, hath but one part wisdom,
And ever three parts coward), I do not know
Why yet I live to say this thing's to do;
Sith I have cause, and will, and strength, and means
To do't. Examples, gross as earth, exhort me;
Witness this army of such mass and charge,
Led by a delicate and tender prince,
Whose spirit, with divine ambition puff,
Makes mouths at the invisible event;
Exposing what is mortal and unsure
To all that fortune, death, and danger dare,
Ev'n for an egg-shell. 'Tis not to be great,
Never to stir without great argument;
But greatly to find quarrel in a straw,
When honour's at the stake. How stand I then,
That have a father kill'd, a mother stain'd,
(Excitements of my reason and my blood),
And let all sleep? while, to my shame, I see
The imminent death of twenty thousand men;
That for a phantasy and trick of fame

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ACT IV. PRINCE of DENMARK. 87

Go to their graves like beds ; fight for a plot,
Whereon the numbers cannot try the cause,
Which is not tomb enough and continent
To hide the slain ? O then, from this time forth,
My thoughts be bloody, or be nothing worth ! [*Exit.*]

S C E N E V.

Changes to a Palace.

Enter QUEEN, HORATIO, and a GENTLEMAN.

Queen. I will not speak with her.

Gent. She is importunate,
Indeed, distract ; her mood will needs be pitied.

Queen. What would she have ?

Gent. She speaks much of her father ; says, she hears
There's tricks i' th' world ; and hems, and beats her
heart ;

Spurns enviously at straws ; speaks things in doubt,
That carry but half sence : her speech is nothing,
Yet the unshaped use of it doth move
The hearers to collection ; they aim at it,
And botch the words up fit to their own thoughts ;
Which, as her winks and nods and gestures yield them,
Indeed would make one think, there might be thought ;
Tho' nothing sure, yet much unhappily.

Hor. 'Twere good she were spoken with, for she may
strow

Dangerous conjectures in ill-breeding minds.

Let her come in. —

Queen. To my sick soul, as sin's true nature is,
Each toy seems prologue to some great amiss :
So full of artless jealousy is guilt,
It spills itself, in fearing to be spilt.

Enter OPHELIA *distracted.*

Oph. Where is the beauteous Majesty of Denmark ?

Queen. How now, Ophelia ?

Oph. How should I your true love know from another one ?
By his cockle hat and staff, and his sandal shoos. [*Singing.*]

Queen. Alas, sweet Lady; what imports this song?

Oph. Say you? nay, pray you, mark.

*He's dead and gone, Lady, he's dead and gone;
At his head a grass green turf, at his heels a stone.*

Enter KING.

Queen. Nay, but Ophelia—

Oph. Pray you, mark.

White the shroud as the mountain-snow.

Queen. Alas, look here, my Lord.

Oph. Larded all with sweet flowers;

Which bewept to the grave did go

With true love showers.

King. How do ye, pretty Lady?

Oph. Well, God yield you! they say, the owl was
a baker's daughter. Lord, we know what we are, but
know not what we may be. God be at your table!

King. Conceit upon her father.

Oph. Pray, let us have no words of this; but when
they ask you what it means, say you this:

*To-morrow is St Valentine's day, all in the morn betime,
And I a maid at your window, to be your Valentine.*

*Then up he rose, and don'd his cloaths, and dop'd the
chamber door;*

Let in the maid, that out a maid never departed more.

King. Pretty Ophelia!

Oph. Indeed, without an oath, I'll make an end on't.

By Gis, and by St Charity,

Alack, and fie for shame!

Young men will do't, if they come to't,

By cock, they are to blame.

Quoth she, before you tumbled me,

You promis'd me to wed:

So would I ha' done, by yonder sun,

And thou hadst not come to my bed.

King. How long has she been thus?

Oph. I hope all will be well. We must be patient,
but I cannot chuse but weep to think they should lay
him i' th' cold ground; my brother shall know of it;

ACT IV. PRINCE of DENMARK. 89

and so I thank you for your good counsel. Come, my coach; good night, Ladies; good night, sweet Ladies; good night, good night.

King. Follow her close, give her good watch, I pray you; [Exit Horatio.]

This is the poison of deep grief; it springs
All from her father's death. O Gertrude, Gertrude!
When sorrows come, they come not single spies,
But in battalions. First, her father slain;
Next your son gone, and he most violent author
Of his own just remove; the people muddied,
Thick and unwholesome in their thoughts and whispers,
For good Polonius's death; (we've done but greenly,
In private to inter him); poor Ophelia,
Divided from herself, and her fair judgment,
(Without the which we're pictures, or meer beasts):
Last, and as much containing as all these,
Her brother is in secret come from France:
Feeds on this wonder, keeps himself in clouds,
And wants not buzzers to infect his ear
With pestilent speeches of his father's death;
Wherein necessity, of matter beggar'd,
Will nothing stick our persons to arraign
In ear and ear. O my dear Gertrude, this,
Like to a murdering piece, in many places
Gives me superfluous death! [A noise within.]

Queen. Alack! what noise is this?

S C E N E VI.

Enter a MESSENGER.

King. Where are my Switzers? let them guard the door.

What is the matter?

Mess. Save yourself, my Lord.

The ocean, overpeering of his list,
Eats not the flats with more impetuous haste,
Than young Laertes, in a riotous head,
O'erbears your officers; the rabble call him Lord;
And as the world were now but to begin,

Antiquity forgot, custom not known,
The ratifiers and props of every ward;
They cry, Chuse we Laertes for our King.
Caps, hands, and tongues, applaud it to the clouds;
Laertes shall be King, Laertes King!

Queen. How chearfully on the false trail they cry!
Oh, this is counter, you false Danish dogs. [*Noise within.*]

Enter LAERTES, with a party at the door.

King. The doors are broke.

Laer. Where is this King, Sirs? stand you all without.

All. No, let's come in.

Laer. I pray you, give me leave.

All. We will, we will.

[*Exeunt.*]

Laer. I thank you, keep the door.

O thou vile King, give me my father.

Queen. Calmly, good Laertes.

Laer. That drop of blood that's calm, proclaims me
bastard;

Cries cuckold to my father; brands the harlot
Even here, between the chaste and unsmirch'd brow.
Of my true mother.

King. What is the cause, Laertes,
That thy rebellion looks so giant-like?
Let him go, Gertrude; do not fear our person;
There's such divinity doth hedge a king,
That treason can but peep to what it would,
Acts little of its will. Tell me, Laertes,
Why are you thus incens'd? Let him go, Gertrude.
Speak, man.

Laer. Where is my father?

King. Dead.

Queen. But not by him.

King. Let him demand his fill.

Laer. How came he dead? I'll not be juggled with:
To hell, allegiance! vows, to the blackest devil!
Conscience, and grace, to the profoundest pit!
I dare damnation; to this point I stand,
That both the worlds I give to negligence,
Let come what comes; only I'll be reveng'd
Most thoroughly for my father.

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Act IV. PRINCE of DENMARK.

98

King. Who shall stay you?

Laer. My will, not all the world:
And for my means, I'll husband them so well,
They shall go far with little.

King. Good Laertes,
If you desire to know the certainty
Of your dear father, is't writ in your revenge,
That, sweep-stake, you will draw both friend and foe,
Winner and loser?

Laer. None but his enemies.

King. Will you know them then?

Laer. To his good friends thus wide I'll ope my arms,
And, like the kind life-rend'ring pelican,
Repast them with my blood.

King. Why, now you speak
Like a good child, and a true gentleman.
That I am guiltless of your father's death,
And am most sensible in grief for it,
It shall as level to your judgment pierce,
As day does to your eye. [*A noise within, "Let her
come in."*]

Laer. How now, what noise is that?

S C E N E VII.

*Enter OPHELIA, fantastically dress'd with straws and
flowers.*

O heat, dry up my brains! tears, seven times salt,
Burn out the sense and virtue of mine eye!
By Heav'n, thy madness shall be paid with weight,
Till our scale turn the beam. O rose of May!
Dear maid, kind sister, sweet Ophelia!
O heav'n's, is't possible a young maid's wits
Should be as mortal as an old man's life!
Nature is fine in love; and where 'tis fine,
It sends some precious instance of itself
After the thing it loves.

Oph. They bore him bare-fac'd on the bier,
And on his grave rain'd many a tear;
Fare you well, my dove!

Laer. Hadst thou thy wits, and didst persuade revenge,
It could not move thus:

Oph. You must sing, down a-down, and you call him
a-down-a. O how the wheel becomes it! it is the false
steward that stole his master's daughter.

Laer. This nothing's more than matter.

Oph. There's rosemary, that's for remembrance;
pray, love, remember; and there's pansies, that's for
thoughts.

Laer. A document in madness, thoughts and remem-
brance fitted.

Oph. There's fennel for you, and columbines; there's
rue for you, and here's some for me. We may call it
herb of grace o' Sundays: you may wear your rue with
a difference. There's a daisy; I would give you some
violets, but they withered all when my father dy'd: so
they say, he made a good end;

For bonny sweet Robin is all my joy.

Laer. Thought and affliction, passion, hell itself,
She turns to favour, and to prettiness.

Oph. And will he not come again?

And will he not come again?

No, no, he is dead; go to thy death-bed,

He never will come again.

His beard was as white as snow,

All flaxen was his pole:

He is gone, he is gone, and we cast away moan;

Gramercy on his soul!

And of all Christian souls: God b' w' ye. [*Exit Ophelia.*]

Laer. Do you see this, you gods!

King. Laertes, I must commune with your grief,
Or you deny me right: go but apart,
Make choice of whom your wisest friends you will,
And they shall hear and judge 'twixt you and me.
If by direct or by collateral hand
They find us touch'd, we will our kingdom give,
Our crown, our life, and all that we call ours,
To you in satisfaction. But if not,
Be you content to lend your patience to us,
And we shall jointly labour with your soul,
To give it due content.

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ACT IV. PRINCE of DENMARK. 95

Laer. Let this be so.
His means of death, his obscure funeral,
No trophy, sword, nor hatchment o'er his bones,
No noble rite, nor formal ostentation,
Cry to be heard, as 'twere from heav'n to earth,
That I must call't in question.

King. So you shall:
And where th' offence is, let the great tax fall.
I pray you go with me. [Exit.

S C E N E VIII.

Enter HORATIO, with an Attendant.

Hor. What are they that would speak with me?

Ser. Sailors, Sir; they say they have letters for you.

Hor. Let them come in. [Exit Servant.

I do not know from what part of the world
I should be greeted, if not from Lord Hamlet.

Enter SAILORS.

Sail. God bless you, Sir.

Hor. Let him bless thee too.

Sail. He shall, Sir, an't please him.—There's a letter for you, Sir: it comes from th' ambassador that was bound for England, if your name be Horatio, as I am let to know it is.

Horatio reads the letter.

Horatio, when thou shalt have overlook'd this, give these fellows some means to the King: they have letters for him. Ere we were two days old at sea, a pirate of very warlike appointment gave us chase. Finding ourselves too slow of sail, we put on a compelled valour, and in the grapple I boarded them: on the instant they got clear of our ship, so I alone became their prisoner. They have dealt with me like thieves of mercy; but they knew what they did: I am to do a good turn for them. Let the King have the letters I have sent, and repair thou to me with as much haste as thou wouldst fly death. I have words to speak in thy ear will make thee dumb, yet are they much too light for the matter. These good fellows

will bring thee where I am. Rosincrantz and Guildenstern hold their course for England. Of them I have much to tell thee. Farewell.

He that thou knowest thine, HAMLET.

Come, I will make you way for these your letters;
And do't the speedier, that you may direct me
To him from whom you brought them. *[Exeunt.]*

S C E N E IX.

Enter KING and LAERTES.

King. Now must your conscience my acquittance seal,
And you must put me in your heart for friend;
Sith you have heard, and with a knowing ear,
That he which hath your noble father slain,
Pursued my life.

Laer. It well appears. But tell me
Why you proceeded not against these feats,
So crimeful and so capital in nature,
As by your safety, wisdom, all things else,
You mainly were stirr'd up?

King. Two special reasons,
Which may to you perhaps seem much unfinew'd,
And yet to me are strong. The Queen his mother
Lives almost by his looks; and for myself,
(My virtue or my plague, be't either which),
She's so conjunctive to my life and soul,
That, as the star moves not but in his sphere,
I could not but by her. The other motive,
Why to a public count I might not go,
Is the great love the general gender bear him;
Who, dipping all his faults in their affection,
Would, like the spring that turneth wood to stone,
Convert his gyves to graces. So that my arrows,
Too slightly timber'd for so low a wind,
Would have reverted to my bow again,
And not where I had aim'd them.

Laer. And so have I a noble father lost,
A sister driven into desperate terms,
Whose worth, if praises may go back again,

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ACT IV. PRINCE of DENMARK. 95

Stood challenger on mount of all the age
For her perfections—But my revenge will come.

King. Break not your sleeps for that; you must not think,

That we are made of stuff so flat and dull,
That we can let our beard be shook with danger,
And think it pastime. You shall soon hear more.

I lov'd your father, and we love ourself.

And that I hope will teach you to imagine——

How now? what news?

Enter MESSENGER.

Mef. Letters, my Lord, from Hamlet.

These to your Majesty; this to the Queen.

King. From Hamlet! who brought them?

Mef. Sailors, my Lord, they say; I saw them not:
They were given me by Claudio, he receiv'd them.

King. Laertes, thou shalt hear them: leave us, all—

[*Exit Mef.*]

*High and Mighty, You shall know I am set naked on
your kingdom. To-morrow shall I beg leave to see your
kingly eyes. When I shall, (first asking your pardon
thereunto,) recount th' occasion of my sudden return.*

HAMLET.

What should this mean? are all the rest come back?

Or is it some abuse—and no such thing?

Laer. Know you the hand?

King. 'Tis Hamlet's character;

Naked, and (in a postscript here) he says,

Alone: can you advise me?

Laer. I'm lost in it, my Lord: but let him come;

It warms the very sickness in my heart,

That I shall live and tell him to his teeth,

Thus diddest thou.

King. If it be so, Laertes,

As how should it be so?—how otherwise?—

Will you be rul'd by me?

Laer. Ay; so you'll not o'er-rule me to a peace.

King. To thine own peace. If he be now return'd,

As liking not his voyage, and that he means
 No more to undertake it; I will work him
 To an exploit now ripe in my device,
 Under the which he shall not chuse but fall:
 And for his death no wind of blame shall breathe;
 But ev'n his mother shall uncharge the practice,
 And call it accident.

Laer. I will be rul'd,
 The rather if you could devise it so,
 That I might be the organ.

King. It falls right:
 You have been talk'd of since your travel much,
 And that in Hamlet's hearing, for a quality
 Wherein they say you shine; your sum of parts
 Did not together pluck such envy from him,
 As did that one, and that in my regard
 Of the unworthiest siege.

Laer. What part is that, my Lord?

King. A very feather in the cap of youth,
 Yet needful too; for youth no less becomes
 The light and careless livery that it wears,
 Than settled age his fables, and his weeds
 Importing wealth and graveness. — Two months since,
 Here was a gentleman of Normandy;
 I've seen myself, and serv'd against the French,
 And they can well on horseback; but this gallant
 Had witchcraft in't: he grew unto his seat;
 And to such wondrous doing brought his horse,
 As he had been incorp'd and demy-natur'd
 With the brave beast; so far he top'd my thought,
 That I in forgery of shapes and tricks
 Come short of what he did.

Laer. A Norman, was't?

King. A Norman.

Laer. Upon my life, Lamond.

King. The same.

Laer. I know him well; he is the brooch, indeed,
 And gem of all the nation.

King. He made confession of you,
 And gave you such a masterly report,

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ACT IV. PRINCE of DENMARK. 97

For art and exercise in your defence;
And for your rapier most especial,
That he cry'd out, 'Twould be a sight indeed,
If one could match you. The scrimers of their nation,
He swore, had neither motion, guard, nor eye,
If you oppos'd 'em.—Sir, this report of his
Did Hamlet so envenom with his envy,
That he could nothing do, but wish and beg
Your sudden coming o'er to play with him.
Now out of this——

Laer. What out of this, my Lord?

King. Laertes, was your father dear to you?
Or are you like the painting of a sorrow,
A face without a heart?

Laer. Why ask you this?

King. Not that I think you did not love your father,
But that I know love is begun by time;
And that I see in passages of proof,
Time qualifies the spark and fire of it:
There lives within the very flame of love
A kind of wick, or snuff, that will abate it,
And nothing is at a like goodness still:
For goodness growing to a pleurisy,
Dies in his own too much; what we would do,
We should do when we would; for this *would* changes,
And hath abatements and delays as many
As there are tongues, are hands, are accidents;
And then this *should* is like a spendthrift's sigh
That hurts by easing. But to the quick o' th' ulcer—
Hamlet comes back; what would you undertake
To shew yourself your father's son indeed
More than in words?

Laer. To cut his throat i' th' church.

King. No place indeed should murder sanctuarise;
Revenge should have no bounds; but, good Laertes,
Will you do this? keep close within your chamber;
Hamlet, return'd, shall know you are come home:
We'll put on those shall praise your excellence,
And set a double varnish on the fame
The Frenchman gave you; bring you in fine together,

And wager on your heads. He being remiss,
Most generous and free from all contriving,
Will not peruse the foils; so that with ease,
Or with a little shuffling, you may choose
A sword unbated, and in a pass of practice
Requite him for your father.

Laer. I will do't;

And for the purpose I'll anoint my sword:
I bought an unction of a mountebank,
So mortal, that but dip a knife in it,
Where it draws blood, no cataplasm so rare,
Collected from all simples that have virtue
Under the moon, can save the thing from death,
That is but scratch'd withal; I'll touch my point
With this contagion, that if I gall him slightly,
It may be death.

King. Let's farther think of this;
Weigh what convenience both of time and means
May fit it to our shape. If this should fail,
And that our drift look through our bad performance,
'Twere better not assay'd; therefore this project
Should have a back or second that might hold,
If this should blast in proof. Soft—let me see—
We'll make a solemn wager on your cunning;—
I ha't—when in your motion you are hot,
(As make your bouts more violent to that end),
And that he calls for drink, I'll have prepar'd him
A chalice for the nonce; whereon but sipping
If he by chance escape your venom'd tuck,
Our purpose may hold there.

S C E N E X.

Enter QUEEN.

How now, sweet Queen?

Queen. One woe doth tread upon another's heel,
So fast they follow: your sister's drown'd, Laertes.

Laer. Drown'd! oh, where?

Queen. There is a willow grows aslant a brook,

Act IV.

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ACT V. PRINCE of DENMARK. 99

That shows his hoar leaves in the glassy stream :
 There with fantastio garlands did she come,
 Of crow-flowers, nettles, daisies, and long purples,
 That liberal shepherds give a grosser name to ;
 (But our cold maids do dead mens' fingers call them)
 There on the pendant boughs, her coronet weeds
 Clamb'ring to hang, an envious sliuer broke ;
 When down her weedy trophies and herself
 Fell in the weeping brook ; her clothes spread wide,
 And mermaid-like, awhile they bore her up ;
 Which time she chaunted snatches of old tunes,
 As one incapable of her own distress ;
 Or like a creature native, and endued
 Unto that element : but long it could not be,
 Till that her garments, heavy with their drink,
 Pull'd the poor wretch from her melodious lay
 To muddy death.

Laer. Alas then, she is drown'd !

Queen. Drown'd, drown'd.

Laer. Too much of water hast thou, poor Ophelia,
 And therefore I forbid my tears ; but yet
 It is our trick ; Nature her custom holds,
 Let Shame say what it will ; when these are gone,
 The woman will be out. Adieu, my Lord !
 I have a speech of fire, that fain would blaze,
 But that this folly drowns it. *[Exit.]*

King. Follow, Gertrude :
 How much had I to do to calm his rage !
 Now fear I this will give it start again ;
 Therefore let's follow. *[Exeunt.]*

ACT V. SCENE I.

A Church.

Enter two CLOWNS, with spades and mattocks.

1 CLOWN.

I S she to be buried in Christian burial, that wilfully
 seeks her own salvation ?

I 2

2 *Clown*. I tell thee she is, therefore make her grave straight; the crowner hath sat on her, and finds it Christian burial.

1 *Clown*. How can that be, unless she drown'd herself in her own defence?

2 *Clown*. Why, 'tis found so.

1 *Clown*. It must be *so offendendo*, it cannot be else. For here lyes the point: if I drown myself wittingly, it argues an act; and an act hath three branches; it is to act, to do, and to perform; *argal*, she drown'd herself wittingly.

2 *Clown*. Nay, but hear you, goodman Delver.

1 *Clown*. Give me leave; here lyes the water, good: here stands the man, good: if the man go to this water, and drown himself, it is, will he, nill he, he goes; mark you that: but if the water come to him, and drown him, he drowns not himself: *Argal*, he that is not guilty of his own death, shortens not his own life.

2 *Clown*. But is this law?

1 *Clown*. Ay, marry is't, crowner's quest law.

2 *Clown*. Will you ha' the truth on't? If this had not been a gentlewoman, she should have been buried out of Christian burial.

1 *Clown*. Why, there thou say'st. And the more pity, that great folk should have countenance in this world to drown or hang themselves, more than their even Christian. Come, my spade; there is no ancient gentlemen but gardeners, ditchers, and grave-makers; they hold up Adam's profession.

2 *Clown*. Was he a gentleman?

1 *Clown*. He was the first that ever bore arms.

2 *Clown*. Why, he had none.

1 *Clown*. What, art a Heathen? how dost thou understand the scripture? the scripture says Adam digg'd; could he dig without arms? I'll put another question to thee; if thou answerest me to the purpose, confess thyself—

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ACT V. PRINCE OF DENMARK. 101

1 *Clown*. What is he that builds stronger than either the mason, the shipwright, or the carpenter?

2 *Clown*. The gallows-maker; for that frame outlives a thousand tenants.

1 *Clown*. I like thy wit well, in good faith; the gallows does well; but how does it well? it does well to those that do ill: now thou dost ill to say the gallows is built stronger than the church; argal, the gallows may do well to thee. To't again, come.

2 *Clown*. Who builds stronger than a mason, a shipwright, or a carpenter?

1 *Clown*. Ay, tell me that, and unyoke.

2 *Clown*. Marry, now I can tell.

1 *Clown*. To't.

2 *Clown*. Mafs, I cannot tell.

Enter HAMLET and HORATIO, at a distance.

1 *Clown*. Cudgel thy brains no more about it; for your dull afs will not mend his pace with beating; and when you are ask'd this question next, say a grave-maker. The houses he makes last till doomsday. Go, get thee to Youghan, and fetch me a stoup of liquor.

[*Exit 2 Clown.*]

He digs, and sings.

In youth when I did love, did love,

Methought it was very sweet;

To contract oh, the time for, a, my behove,

Oh, methought there was nothing so meet.

Ham. Has this fellow no feeling of his business, that he sings at grave-making?

Hor. Custom hath made it to him a property of easiness.

Ham. 'Tis e'en so; the hand of little employment hath the daintier sense.

Clown sings.

But age, with his stealing steps,

Hath claw'd me in his clutch:

And hath shipped me into his land,

As if I had never been such.

Ham. That scull had a tongue in it; and could sing once; how the knave jowles it to the ground, as if it were Cain's jaw-bone, that did the first murder! This might be the pate of a politician, which this ass o'er-offices; one that would circumvent God: might it not?

Hor. It might, my Lord.

Ham. Or of a courtier, which could say, "Good morrow, sweet Lord; how dost thou, good Lord?" This might be my Lord such-a one, that prais'd my Lord such-a one's horse, when he meant to beg it; might it not?

Hor. Ay, my Lord.

Ham. Why, ev'n so: and now my Lady Worm's, chapless, and knock'd about the muzzard with a sexton's spade. Here's a fine revolution, if we had the trick to see't. Did these bones cost no more the breeding, but to play at loggats with 'em? mine ake to think on't.

Clown sings.

A pick-axe and a spade, a spade.

For,—and a shrouding sheet!

O, a pit of clay for to be made.

For such a guest is meet.

Ham. There's another: why may not that be the scull of a lawyer? where be his quiddits now? his quillets? his cases? his tenures, and his tricks? why does he suffer this rude knave now to knock him about the sconce with a dirty shovel, and will not tell him of his action of battery? Hum! this fellow might be in's time a great buyer of land, with his statutes, his recognisances, his fines, his double vouchers, his recoveries. Is this the fine of his fines, and the recovery of his recoveries, to have his fine pate full of fine dirt? will his vouchers vouch him no more of his purchases, and double ones too, than the length and breadth of a pair of indentures? the very conveyances of his lands will hardly ly in this box; and must the inheritor himself have no more? ha?

Hor. Not a jot more, my Lord.

Act V. PRINCE of DENMARK. 103

Ham. Is not parchment made of sheep-skins?

Hor. Ay, my Lord, and of calves-skins too.

Ham. They are sheep and calves that seek out assurance in that. I will speak to this fellow. Whose grave is this, sirrah?

Clown. Mine, Sir——

O, a pit of clay for to be made—

For such a guest is meet.

Ham. I think it be thine indeed, for thou ly'st in't.

Clown. You ly out on't, Sir, and therefore it is not yours; for my part, I do not lie in't, yet it is mine.

Ham. Thou dost lie in't, to be in't, and say, 'tis thine: 'tis for the dead, and not for the quick, therefore thou liest.

Clown. 'Tis a quick lie, Sir, 'twill away again from me to you.

Ham. What man dost thou dig it for?

Clown. For no man, Sir.

Ham. What woman then?

Clown. For none neither.

Ham. Who is to be buried in't?

Clown. One that was a woman, Sir; but, rest her soul, she's dead.

Ham. How absolute the knave is! we must speak by the card, or equivocation will undo us. By the Lord, Horatio, these three years I have taken note of it, the age is grown so picked, that the toe of the peasant comes so near the heel of our courtier, he galls his kibe. How long hast thou been a gravemaker?

Clown. Of all the days i' th' year, I came to't that day that our last King Hamlet o'ercame Fortinbras.

Ham. How long is that since?

Clown. Cannot you tell that? every fool can tell that: it was that very day that young Hamlet was born, he that was mad, and sent into England.

Ham. Ay, marry, why was he sent into England?

Clown. Why, because he was mad; he shall recover his wits there; or, if he does not, 'tis no great matter there.

Ham. Why?

Clown. 'Twill not be seen in him; there the men are as mad as he.

Ham. How came he mad?

Clown. Very strangely, they say.

Ham. How strangely?

Clown. 'Faith, e'en with losing his wits.

Ham. Upon what ground?

Clown. Why, here in Denmark. I have been sexton here, man and boy, thirty years.

Ham. How long will a man ly i' th' earth ere he rot?

Clown. 'Faith, if he be not rotten before he die, (as we have many pocky corsees now-a-days, that will scarce hold the laying in), he will last you some eight year, or nine year; a tanner will last you nine years.

Ham. Why he more than another?

Clown. Why, Sir, his hide is so tann'd with his trade, that he will keep out water a great while. And your water is a sore decayer of your whoreson dead body. Here's a scull now has lain in the earth three and twenty years.

Ham. Whose was it?

Clown. A whoreson mad fellow's it was; whose do you think it was?

Ham. Nay, I know not.

Clown. A pestilence on him for a mad rogue! he pour'd a flaggon of Rhenish on my head once. This same scull, Sir, was Yorick's scull, the King's jester.

Ham. This?

Clown. E'en that.

Ham. Alas, poor Yorick! I knew him, Horatio; a fellow of infinite jest; of most excellent fancy: he hath borne me on his back a thousand times; and now how abhorred in my imagination it is! my gorge rises at it. Here hung those lips that I have kiss'd I know not how oft. Where be your gibes now; your gambols; your songs? your flashes of merriment, that were wont to set the table in a roar? not one now, to mock your own grinning? quite chap-fallen? Now get you to my Lady's chamber, and tell her, let her paint an inch

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thick, to this favour she must come; make her laugh at that. — Pr'ythee, Horatio, tell me one thing.

Hor. What's that, my Lord?

Ham. Dost thou think Alexander look'd o' this fashion i' th' earth?

Hor. E'en so.

Ham. And smelt so? puh! [Smelling to the scull.

Hor. E'en so, my Lord.

Ham. To what base uses we may return, Horatio? why may not imagination trace the noble dust of Alexander, till he find it stopping a bung-hole?

Hor. 'Twere to consider too curiously, to consider so.

Ham. No, faith, not a jot: but to follow him thither with modesty enough, and likelihood to lead it; as thus: Alexander died, Alexander was buried, Alexander returneth to dust; the dust is earth; of earth we make loam; and why of that loam, whereto he was converted, might they not stop a beer-barrel? Imperial Caesar, dead and turn'd to clay, Might stop a hole to keep the wind away. Oh that that earth which kept the world in awe, Should patch a wall to expel the winter's flaw! But soft! but soft a while—here comes the King.

S C E N E II.

Enter KING, QUEEN, LAERTES, and a coffin, with Lords, and Priests attendant.

The Queen, the courtiers. What is that they follow, And with such maimed rites? this doth betoken, The corse they follow did with desperate hand Foredo its own life; 'twas of some estate. Cough we a while, and mark.

Laer. What ceremony else?

Ham. That is Laertes, a most noble youth: mark—

Laer. What ceremony else?

Priest. Her obsequies have been so far enlarg'd As we have warranty; her death was doubtful: And but that great command o'erflows the order,

She should in ground unsanctified have lodg'd
Till the last trump; for charitable prayers,
Shards, flints, and pebbles, should be thrown on her:
Yet here she is allow'd her virgin chants,
Her maiden strewments, and the bringing home
Of bell and burial.

Laer. Must no more be done!

Priest. No more be done!

We should profane the service of the dead,
To sing a *Requiem*, and such rest to her
As to peace-parted souls.

Laer. Lay her i' th' earth;
And from her fair and unpolluted flesh
May violets spring! I tell thee, churlish priest,
A ministering angel shall my sister be,
When thou lyest howling.

Ham. What, the fair Ophelia!

Queen. Sweets to the sweet, farewell!
I hop'd thou should'st have been my Hamlet's wife;
I thought thy bride-bed to have deck'd, sweet maid,
And not to have strew'd thy grave.

Laer. O treble woe
Fall ten times treble on that cursed head,
Whose wicked deed thy most ingenious sense
Depriv'd thee of! Hold off the earth a while,
Till I have caught her once more in my arms:

[*Laertes leaps into the grave.*
Now pile your dust upon the quick and dead,
Till of this flat a mountain you have made,
T' o'ertop old Pelion, or the skyish head
Of blue Olympus.

Ham. discovering himself. What is he whose griefs
Bear such an emphasis? whose phrase of sorrow
Conjures the wand'ring stars, and makes them stand
Like wonder-wounded hearers? this is I,

[*Hamlet leaps into the grave.*
Hamlet the Dane.

Laer. The devil take thy soul! [*Grappling with him.*

Ham. Thou pray'st not well.

I pr'ythee, take thy fingers from my throat—

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ACT V. PRINCE of DENMARK. 107

For though I am not splenitive and rash,
Yet have I in me something dangerous,
Which let thy wisdom fear. Hold off thy hand.

King. Pluck them asunder—

Queen. Hamlet, Hamlet—

Hor. Good my Lord, be quiet.

[The attendants part them.]

Ham. Why, I will fight with him upon this theme,
Until my eye-lids will no longer wag.

Queen. Oh my son! what theme?

Ham. I lov'd Ophelia; forty thousand brothers
Could not with all their quantity of love
Make up my sum. What wilt thou do for her?

King. O, he is mad, Laertes.

Queen. For love of God forbear him.

Ham. Come, shew me what thou'lt do.

Woo't weep? woo't fight? woo't fast? woo't tear thyself?

Woo't drink up eisel, eat a crocodile?

I'll do't.—Dost thou come hither but to whine?

To outface me with leaping in her grave?

Be buried quick with her; and so will I;

And if thou prate of mountains, let them throw

Millions of acres on us, till our ground,

Singeing his pate against the burning sun,

Make Ossa like a wart! nay, an' thou'lt mouth,

I'll rant as well as thou.

Queen. This is meer madness;

And thus a while the fit will work on him:

Anon as patient as the female dove,

Ere that her golden couplets are disclos'd,

His silence will sit drooping.

Ham. Hear you, Sir—

What is the reason that you use me thus?

I lov'd you ever; but it is no matter—

Let Hercules himself do what he may,

The cat will mew, the dog will have his day. [Exit.]

King. I pray you, good Horatio, wait upon him.

[Exit Hor.]

Strengthen your patience in our last night's speech.

[To Laertes.]

We'll put the matter to the present push.
 Good Gertrude, set some watch over your son.
 This grave shall have a living monument.
 An hour of quiet shortly shall we see;
 Till then in patience our proceeding be. [Exeunt.]

S C E N E III.

Changes to a Hall in the palace.

Enter HAMLET and HORATIO.

Ham. So much for this, now shall you see the other,
 You do remember all the circumstance?

Hor. Remember it, my Lord!

Ham. Sir, in my heart there was a kind of fighting,
 That would not let me sleep; methought I lay
 Worse than the mutines in the bilboes; rashness
 (And prais'd be rashness for it) lets us know
 Our indiscretion sometimes serves us well,
 When our deep plots do fail; and that should teach us,
 There's a Divinity that shapes our ends,
 Rough-hew them how we will.

Hor. That is most certain.

Ham. Up from my cabin,
 My sea-grown scarft about me, in the dark
 Grop'd I to find out them; had my desire,
 Finger'd their packet, and in fine withdrew
 To mine own room again; making so bold
 (My fears forgetting manners) to unseal
 Their grand commission, where I found, Horatio,
 A royal knavery; an exact command,
 Larded with many several sorts of reasons,
 Importing Denmark's health, and England's too,
 With, ho! such bugbs and goblins in my life;
 That on the supervise, no leisure bated,
 No, not to stay the grinding of the ax,
 My head should be struck off.

Hor. Is't possible?

Ham. Here's the commission, read it at more leisure;
 But wilt thou hear now how I did proceed?

Hor. I beseech you.

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Ham. Being thus benetted round with villains,
(Ere I could mark the prologue to my bane,
They had begun the play), I sat me down,
Devis'd a new commission, wrote it fair :
(I once did hold it, as our statists do,
A baseness to write fair ; and labour'd much
How to forget that learning ; but, Sir, now
It did me yeoman's service) : wilt thou know
Th' effect of what I wrote ?

Hor. Ay, my good Lord.

Ham. An earnest conjuration from the King,
As England was his faithful tributary,
As love between them, like the palm, might flourish,
As peace should still her wheaten garland wear,
And stand a commerce 'tween their amities ;
And many such like arts of great charge ;
That on the view and knowing these contents,
Without debatement farther, more or less,
He should the bearers put to sudden death,
Not shriving-time allow'd.

Hor. How was this seal'd ?

Ham. Why, ev'n in that was Heaven ordinant :
I had my father's signet in my purse,
Which was the model of that Danish seal :
I folded the writ up in form of th' other,
Subscrib'd it, gave th' impression, plac'd it safely,
The changeling never known. Now, the next day
Was our sea-fight, and what to this was sequent,
Thou know'st already.

Hor. So, Guildenstern and Rosencrantz go to't.

Ham. Why, man, they did make love to this employment. —

They are not near my conscience ; their defeat
Doth by their own insinuation grow.
'Tis dangerous when the baser nature comes
Between the pass and fell incensed points
Of mighty opposites.

Hor. Why, what a King is this ?

Ham. Does it not, think'st thou, stand me now upon ?
He that kill'd my King, and whor'd my mother,

Popt in between th' election and my hopes,
 Thrown out his angle for my proper life;
 And with such cozenage; is't not perfect conscience,
 To quit him with this arm? and is't not to be damn'd,
 To let this canker of our nature come
 In further evil?

Hor. It must be shortly known to him from England,
 What is the issue of the business there.

Ham. It will be short.
 The interim's mine: and a man's life's no more
 Than to say, one.

But I am very sorry, good Horatio,
 That to Laertes I forgot myself;
 For by the image of my cause I see
 The portraiture of his; I'll court his favour:
 But, sure, the bravery of his grief did put me
 Into a tow'ring passion.

Hor. Peace, who comes here?

S C E N E IV.

Enter OSRICK.

Ofr. Your Lordship is right welcome back to Denmark.

Ham. I humbly thank you, Sir. Dost know this water-fly?

Hor. No, my good Lord.

Ham. Thy state is the more gracious; for 'tis a vice
 to know him: he hath much land, and fertile; let a
 beast be Lord of beasts, and his crib shall stand at the
 King's mess; 'tis a chough; but, as I say, spacious in
 the possession of dirt.

Ofr. Sweet Lord, if your Lordship were at leisure, I
 should impart a thing to you from his Majesty.

Ham. I will receive it with all diligence of spirit:
 your bonnet to its right use, — 'tis for the head.

Ofr. I thank your Lordship, 'tis very hot.

Ham. No, believe me, 'tis very cold: the wind is
 northerly.

Ofr. It is indifferent cold, my Lord, indeed.

ACT V. PRINCE OF DENMARK. 111

Ham. But yet methinks it is very sultry, and hot, for my complexion——

Ofr. Exceedingly, my Lord; it is very sultry, as 'twere, I cannot tell how.— My Lord, his Majesty bid me signify to you, that he has laid a great wager on your head. Sir, this is the matter——

Ham. I beseech you, remember——

Ofr. Nay, in good faith, for mine ease, in good faith.—Sir, here is newly come to court Laertes; believe me, an absolute gentleman, full of most excellent differences, of very soft society, and great shew: indeed, to speak feelingly of him, he is the card or kalendar of gentry; for you shall find in him the continent of what part a gentleman would see.

Ham. Sir, his desinement suffers no perdition in you; tho' I know, to divide him inventorially would dizzy the arithmetic of memory; and yet but slow neither in respect of his quick sail. But, in the verity of extolment, I take him to be a soul of great article; and his infusion of such dearth and rareness, as, to make true diction of him, his semblable is his mirror, and who else would trace him, his umbrage, nothing more.

Ofr. Your Lordship speaks most infallibly of him.

Ham. The concernancy, Sir?—Why do we wrap the gentleman in our more rawer breath? [To Horatio.

Ofr. Sir,——

Hor. Is't not possible to understand in another tongue? you will do't, Sir, rarely.

Ham. What imports the nomination of this gentleman?

Ofr. Of Laertes?

Hor. His purse is empty already: all's golden words are spent.

Ham. Of him, Sir.

Ofr. I know you are not ignorant,——

Ham. I would you did, Sir; yet, in faith, if you did, it would not much improve me.—Well, Sir.

Ofr. You are not ignorant of what excellence Laertes is.

Ham. I dare not confess that, lest I shou'd compare

with him in excellence: but to know a man well, were to know himself.

Ofr. I mean, Sir, for his weapon: but in the imputation laid on him by them in his meed, he's unfortun'd.

Ham. What's his weapon?

Ofr. Rapier and dagger.

Ham. That's two of his weapons; but well.

Ofr. The King, Sir, has wag'd with him six Barbary horses, against the which he has impon'd, as I take it, six French rapiers and poniards, with their assigns, as girdle, hangers, and so: three of the carriages, in faith, are very dear to fancy, very responsive to the hilts, most delicate carriages, and of very liberal conceit.

Ham. What call you the carriages?

Hor. I knew you must be edified by the margent, ere you had done. [*Aside.*]

Ofr. The carriages, Sir, are the hangers.

Ham. The phrase would be more germane to the matter, if we could carry cannon by our sides; I would it might be hangers, till then. But, on; six Barbary horses against six French swords, their assigns, and three liberal-conceited carriages; that's the French bet against the Danish; why is this impon'd, as you call it?

Ofr. The King, Sir, hath laid, that in a dozen passes between you and him, he shall not exceed you three hits; he hath laid on twelve for nine; and it would come to immediate trial, if your Lordship would vouchsafe the answer.

Ham. How if I answer no?

Ofr. I mean, my Lord, the opposition of your person in trial.

Ham. Sir, I will walk here in the hall; if it please his Majesty, 'tis the breathing-time of day with me; let the foils be brought, the gentleman willing, and the King hold his purpose, I will win for him, if I can; if not, I'll gain nothing but my shame, and the odd hits.

Ofr. Shall I deliver you so?

Ham. To this effect, Sir, after what flourish your nature will.

ACT V. PRINCE of DENMARK. 113

Ofr. I commend my duty to your Lordship. [Exit.]

Ham. Yours, yours; he does well to commend it himself, there are no tongues else for's turn.

Hor. This lapwing runs away with the shell on his head.

Ham. He did compliment with his dug before he suck'd it. Thus has he (and many more of the same breed, that I know the drossy age doats on) only got the tune of the time, and outward habit of encounter, a-kind of yesty collection, which carries them through and through the most fann'd and winnowed opinions; and do but blow them to their trials, the bubbles are out.

Enter a LORD.

Lord. My Lord, his Majesty commended him to you by young Ofrick; who brings back to him, that you attend him in the hall: he sends to know if your pleasure hold to play with Laertes, or that you will take longer time?

Ham. I am constant to my purposes, they follow the King's pleasure; if his fitness speaks, mine is ready, now, or whensoever, provided I be so able as now.

Lord. The King and Queen, and all, are coming down.

Ham. In happy time.

Lord. The Queen desires you to use some gentle entertainment to Laertes, before you fall to play.

Ham. She well instructs me. [Exit Lord.]

Hor. You shall lose this wager, my Lord.

Ham. I do not think so; since he went into France, I have been in continual practice; I shall win at odds. But thou wouldst not think how ill all's here about my heart, — but it is no matter.

Hor. Nay, my good Lord.

Ham. It is but foolery; but it is such a kind of gain-giving as would perhaps trouble a woman.

Hor. If your mind dislike any thing, obey it. I will forestall their repair hither, and say you are not fit.

Ham. Not a whit, we defy augury; there is a special

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providence in the fall of a sparrow. If it be now, 'tis not to come; if it be not to come, it will be now: if it be not now, yet it will come; the readiness is all. Since no man, if ought he leaves, knows, what is't to leave betimes? Let it be.

S C E N E V.

Enter KING, QUEEN, LAERTES, and Lords, OSRICK, with other Attendants with foils and gauntlets. A table with flaggons of wine on it.

King. Come, Hamlet, come, and take this hand from me. *[Gives him the hand of Laertes.]*

Ham. Give me your pardon, Sir; I've done you wrong; But pardon't, as you are a gentleman.

This presence knows, and you must needs have heard; How I am punish'd with a fore distraction.

What I have done,

That might your nature, honour, and exception,

Roughly awake, I here proclaim was madness:

Was't Hamlet wrong'd Laertes? never, Hamlet.

If Hamlet from himself be taken away,

And, when he's not himself, does wrong Laertes,

Then Hamlet does it not; Hamlet denies it.

Who does it then? his madness. If't be so,

Hamlet is of the faction that is wrong'd;

His madness is poor Hamlet's enemy.

Let my disclaiming from a purpos'd evil,

Free me so far in your most generous thoughts,

That I have shot mine arrow o'er the house,

And hurt my brother.

Laer. I am satisfied in nature,

Whose motive, in this case, should stir me most

To my revenge: but in my terms of honour

I stand aloof, and will no reconciliation;

Till by some elder masters of known honour

I have a voice, and president of peace,

To keep my name ungor'd. But till that time,

I do receive your offer'd love like love,

And will not wrong it.

Ham. I embrace it freely,

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ACT V. PRINCE of DENMARK. 135

And will this brother's wager frankly play.
Give us the foils.

Laer. Come, one for me.

Ham. I'll be your foil, Laertes; in mine ignorance
Your skill shall, like a star i' th' darkest night,
Stick fiery off, indeed.

Laer. You mock me, Sir.

Ham. No, by this hand.

King. Give them the foils, young Osrick.
Hamlet, you know the wager.

Ham. Well, my Lord;
Your Grace hath laid the odds o' th' weaker side.

King. I do not fear it, I have seen you both;
But since he's better'd, we have therefore odds.

Laer. This is too heavy, let me see another.

Ham. This likes me well; these foils have all a
length. [Prepares to play.]

Osr. Ay, my good Lord.

King. Set me the stoops of wine upon that table:
If Hamlet gives the first or second hit,
Or quit in answer of the third exchange,
Let all the battlements their ordnance fire;
The King shall drink to Hamlet's better breath:
And in the cup an union shall he throw,
Richer than that which four successive kings
In Denmark's crown have worn. Give me the cups:
And let the kettle to the trumpets speak,
The trumpets to the cannoneer without,
The cannons to the heav'ns, the heav'ns to earth:
Now the King drinks to Hamlet.—Come, begin,
And you the judges bear a wary eye.

Ham. Come on, Sir.

Laer. Come, my Lord. [They play.]

Ham. One—

Laer. No—

Ham. Judgment.

Osr. A hit, a very palpable hit.

Laer. Well—again—

King. Stay, give me drink. Hamlet, this pearl is
thine,

116 H A M L E T, Act V.

Here's to thy health. Give him the cup.

[Trumpets sound, *Hot goes off.*]

Ham. I'll play this bout first, let it by a while.

[*They play.*]

Come—another hit—what say you?

Laer. A touch, a touch, I do confess.

King. Our son shall win.

Queen. He's fat, and scant of breath.

Here, Hamlet, take my napkin, rub thy brows;

The Queen carouses to thy fortune, Hamlet.

Ham. Good Madam—

King. Gertrude, do not drink.

Queen. I will, my Lord; I pray you pardon me.

[*Drinks.*]

King. It is the poison'd cup, it is too late.

[*Aside.*]

Ham. I dare not drink yet, Madam; by and by.

Queen. Come, let me wipe thy face.

Laer. I'll hit him now.

King. I do not think't.

Laer. And yet it is almost against my conscience.

[*Aside.*]

Ham. Come, for the third, Laertes, you but dally;

I pray you pass with your best violence;

I am afraid you make a wanton of me.

Laer. Say you so? come on.

[*Play.*]

Ofr. Nothing neither way.

Laer. Have at you now.

[*Laertes wounds Hamlet; then, in scuffling, they change rapiers, and Hamlet wounds Laertes.*]

King. Part them, they are incens'd.

Ham. Nay, come again—

Ofr. Look to the Queen there, ho!

Hor. They bleed on both sides. How is't, my Lord?

Ofr. How is't, Laertes?

Laer. Why, as a woodcock to my own springe, Ofrick, I'm justly kill'd with mine own treachery.

Ham. How does the Queen?

King. She swoons to see them bleed.

Queen. No, no, the drink, the drink—

Oh my dear Hamlet, the drink, the drink,—

I am poison'd—

[*Queen dies.*]

ACT V. PRINCE of DENMARK. 117

Ham. Oh villainy! ho! let the door be lock'd:
Treachery! seek it out—

Laer. It is here. Hamlet, thou art slain;
No medicine in the world can do thee good.
In thee there is not half an hour of life;
The treach'rous instrument is in thy hand,
Unbated and invenom'd: the foul practice
Hath turn'd itself on me. Lo, here I ly,
Never to rise again; thy mother's poison'd;
I can no more—the king, the king's to blame.

Ham. The point invenom'd too?

Then, venom, do thy work.

[*Stabs the King.*]

All. Treason, treason.

King. O yet defend me, friends, I am but hurt.

Ham. Here, thou incestuous, murth'rous, damned
Dane,

Drink off this potion: is the union here?

Follow my mother.

[*King dies.*]

Laer. He is justly serv'd.

It is a poison temper'd by himself.

Exchange forgiveness with me, noble Hamlet;

Mine and my father's death come not on thee,

Nor thine on me!

[*Dies.*]

Ham. Heav'n make thee free of it! I follow thee.

I'm dead, Horatio; wretched Queen, adieu!

You that look pale, and tremble at this chance,

That are but mutes or audience to this act,

Had I but time, (as this fell serjeant Death

Is strict in his arrest), oh, I could tell you—

But let it be—Horatio, I am dead;

Thou liv'st, report me and my cause aright

To the unsatisfied.

Hor. Never believe it.

I'm more an antic Roman than a Dane;

Here's yet some liquor left.

Ham. As th' art a man,

Give me the cup; let go; by Heav'n I'll have it.

Oh good Horatio, what a wounded name,

Things standing thus unknown, shall live behind me?

If thou didst ever hold me in thy heart,

Absent thee from felicity a while,
And in this harsh world draw thy breath in pain,
To tell my tale. [*March afar off, and shout within.*
What warlike noise is this?

S C E N E VI.

Enter OSRICK.

Osr. Young Fortinbras, with conquest come from
Poland,
To the ambassadors of England gives
This warlike volley.

Ham. O I die, Horatio:

The potent poison quite o'ergrows my spirit;
I cannot live to hear the news from England.
But I do prophesy, th' election lights
On Fortinbras; he has my dying voice;
So tell him, with the occurrents more or less,
Which have solicited.—The rest is silence. [*Dies.*

Hor. Now cracks a noble heart! good night, sweet
Prince;
And flights of angels wing thee to thy rest!
Why does the drum come hither?

*Enter FORTINBRAS and English Ambassadors, with
drum, colours, and attendants.*

Fort. Where is this fight?

Hor. What is it you would see?

If aught of woe or wonder, cease your search.

For. This quarry cries—on havoc. Oh proud Death!
What feast is tow'rd in thy infernal cell,
That thou so many princes at a shot
So bloodily hast struck?

Amb. The sight is dismal,
And our affairs from England come too late:
The ears are senseless that should give us hearing;
To tell him, his commandment is fulfill'd,
That Rosincrantz and Guildenstern are dead.
Where should we have our thanks?

Hor. Not from his mouth,

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Act V. PRINCE OF DENMARK. 119

Had it th' ability of life to thank you :
 He never gave commandment for their death.
 But since so jump upon this bloody question,
 You from the Polack wars, and you from England,
 Are here arriv'd ; give order, that these bodies
 High on a stage be placed to the view,
 And let me speak to th' yet unknowing world,
 How these things came about. So shall you hear
 Of cruel, bloody, and unnatural acts ;
 Of accidental judgments, casual slaughters ;
 Of deaths put on by cunning, and forc'd cause ;
 And, in this upshot, purposes mistook,
 Fall'n on th' inventors' heads. All this can I
 Truly deliver.

Fort. Let us haste to hear it,
 And call the noblesse to the audience.
 For me, with sorrow I embrace my fortune ;
 I have some rights of memory in this kingdom,
 Which now to claim, my vantage doth invite me.

Hor. Of that I shall have also cause to speak,
 And from his mouth whose voice will draw on more :
 But let this same be presently perform'd,
 Even while mens minds are wild, lest more mischance
 On plots and errors happen.

Fora. Let four captains
 Bear Hamlet, like a soldier, to the stage ;
 For he was likely, had he been put on,
 To have prov'd most royally. And for his passage,
 The soldiers' music, and the rites of war
 Speak loudly for him——
 Take up the body : such a sight as this
 Becomes the field, but here shews much amiss.
 Go, bid the soldiers shoot.

*[Exeunt marching : after which a peal of
 ordnance is shot off*.]*

* If the dramas of Shakespeare were to be characterised, each by the particular excellence which distinguishes it from the rest, we must allow to the tragedy of Hamlet the praise of variety. The incidents are so numerous, that the argument of the play would make a long tale. The scenes are

interchangeably diversified with merriment and solemnity; with merriment that includes judicious and instructive observations, and solemnity not strained by poetical violence above the natural sentiments of man. New characters appear from time to time in continual succession, exhibiting various forms of life, and particular modes of conversation. The pretended madness of Hamlet causes much mirth; the mournful distraction of Ophelia fills the heart with tenderness, and every personage produces the effect intended, from the apparition that in the first act chills the blood with horror, to the fop in the last, that exposes affectation to just contempt.

The conduct is perhaps not wholly secure against objections. The action is indeed for the most part in continual progression, but there are some scenes which neither forward nor retard it. Of the feigned madness of Hamlet there appears no adequate cause, for he does nothing which he might not have done with the reputation of sanity. He plays the madman most, when he treats Ophelia with so much rudeness, which seems to be useless and wanton cruelty.

Hamlet is, through the whole play, rather an instrument than an agent. After he has, by the stratagem of *the play*, convicted the King, he makes no attempt to punish him; and his death is at last effected by an incident which Hamlet has no part in producing.

The catastrophe is not very happily produced; the exchange of weapons is rather an expedient of necessity, than a stroke of art. A scheme might easily have been formed to kill Hamlet with the dagger, and Laertes with the bowl.

The poet is accused of having paid little regard to poetical justice, and may be charged with equal neglect of poetical probability. The apparition left the regions of the dead to little purpose; the revenge which he demands is not obtained but by the death of him that was required to take it; and the gratification which would arise from the destruction of an usurper and a murderer, is abated by the untimely death of Ophelia, the young and beautiful, the harmless, and the pious. *Johnson.*



T A N C R E D

A N D

SIGISMUNDA.

PRINCE OF WALES.
TRAGEDY.

BY
JAMES THOMSON.

To which is prefixed,
The LIFE of the AUTHOR.

EDINBURGH:

Printed by and for MARTIN & WOTHERSPOON.

M. DCC. LXXIII.

T A N C R E D

A N D

S I G I S M U N D A .

T R A G E D Y .

J A M E S T H O M S O N .

T H E L I F E O F T H E A U T H O R .



LONDON: BY J. M. L. & CO. 10, MARK LANE.

M. DEC. 1753.

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eminently your ROYAL HIGHNESS has always

extended your favour and patronage to every

art and science, and in a particular manner to

dramatick poetry, which is too well known to

the world for me to mention it here. Allow

me only to wish, that what I have now the ho-

nor to offer to your ROYAL HIGHNESS, may

be judged not unworthy your protection, at

least such a protection, which is too well known to

warm and grateful friends of your goodness to

me makes me desirous to seize every occasion

of declaring in publick, with what profound

respect and devotion I am

SIR,

THE honour your ROYAL HIGHNESS has

done me in the protection you was plea-

sed to give to this tragedy, emboldens me to

lay it now at your feet, and beg your permis-

sion to publish it under your royal patronage.

The favouring and protecting of letters has

been, in all ages and countries, one distin-

guishing mark of a great prince; and that

with good reason, not only as it shews a just-

ness of taste, and elevation of mind, but as the

influence of such a protection, by exciting good

writers to labour with more emulation in the

improvement of their several talents, not a lit-

tle contributes to the embellishment and instruc-

tion of society. But of all the different species

of writing, none has such an effect upon the

lives and manners of men as the dramatick; and

therefore that of all others most deserves the at-

tention of princes, who, by a judicious appro-

bation of such pieces as tend to promote all pu-

blic and private virtue, may more than by

coercive methods secure the purity of the stage,

iv DEDICATION.

and in consequence thereof greatly advance the morals and politeness of their people. How eminently your ROYAL HIGHNESS has always extended your favour and patronage to every art and science, and in a particular manner to dramatic performances, is too well known to the world for me to mention it here. Allow me only to wish, that what I have now the honour to offer to your ROYAL HIGHNESS, may be judged not unworthy your protection, at least in the *Sentiments* which it inculcates. A warm and grateful sense of your goodness to me makes me desirous to seize every occasion of declaring in public, with what profound respect and dutiful attachment, I am,

Your ROYAL HIGHNESS'S

Most obliged,

Most obedient, and

Most devoted servant,

JAMES THOMSON.



piece was published in 1750, and from the university was applied to by Mr. Thomson's reputation was counted by people of the first taste and station. — But the chief advantage which it procured him was, the ne-

who introduced him to the late Lord Chancellor. This

not want was to make a companion for him. — Thomson was chosen as a proper companion for him.

— The expectations which his Works had raised were fully justified by the various publications of his other

the following year, and of course, in a point of view of his works, in 1750 — and the success and

his strength of 1750, when he had in 1750, published his plans in the year 1750, he had in 1750, published his poem to the memory of Sir Isaac Newton, with an ac-

count by his friend Dr. Galt, a gentleman well versed in the Newtonian philosophy. — That same year the review of our reviewers, for the introduction of their

MR James Thomson was born in 1700, at Ednam, in the shire of Roxburgh, in Scotland. His father was minister of Ednam, and was highly respected for his piety and diligence in the pastoral duty. — At this time the study of poetry was become general in Scotland, the best English authors being universally read, and imitations of them attempted — Thomson's genius led him this way, and he soon relinquished his views of engaging in the sacred function: nor had he any prospect of being otherwise provided for in Scotland, where the first fruits of his genius were not so favourably received as they deserved to be. — Hereupon he repaired to London, where works of genius seldom fail of meeting with a candid reception and due encouragement. — Nor were the hopes which Mr. Thomson had conceived, from his journey to the capital, in the least disappointed. — The reception he met with, wherever he was introduced, emboldened him to risk the publication of his excellent poem on *Winter*. — This

vi THE LIFE OF

piece was published in 1726; and, from the universal applause it met with, Mr Thomson's acquaintance was courted by people of the first taste and fashion.—But the chief advantage which it procured him was, the acquaintance of Dr Rundle, afterwards Bishop of Derry, who introduced him to the late Lord Chancellor Talbot; and some years after, when the eldest son of that nobleman was to make his tour of travelling, Mr Thomson was chosen as a proper companion for him.—The expectations which his *Winter* had raised, were fully satisfied by the successive publications of the other seasons: of *Summer*, in the year 1727; of *Spring*, in the following year; and of *Autumn*, in a quarto edition of his works, in 1730.—Beside the *Seasons*, and his tragedy of *Sophonisba*, written and acted with applause in the year 1729, he had, in 1727, published his poem to the memory of Sir Isaac Newton, with an account of his chief discoveries; in which he was assisted by his friend Mr Gray, a gentleman well versed in the Newtonian philosophy.—That same year the resentment of our merchants, for the interruption of their trade by the Spaniards in America, running very high, Mr Thomson zealously took part in it, and wrote his spirited and public-spirited *Britannia*, to rouse the nation to revenge.

With the Hon. Mr Charles Talbot, our author visited most of the courts in Europe; and returned with his views greatly enlarged; not of exterior nature only, and the works of art, but of human life and manners, and of the constitution and policy of the several states, their connections, and their religious institutions.—How particular and judicious his observations were, we see in his poem on *Liberty*, begun soon after his return to England.—On his return to England with Mr Talbot (who soon after died) the chancellor made him his secretary of briefs; a place of little attendance, suiting his retired indolent way of life, and equal to all his wants.—This place fell when death not long after, deprived him of his noble patron, and he then found himself reduced to a state of precarious dependance,

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in which he passed the remainder of his life: excepting only the two last years of it, during which he enjoyed the place of surveyor-general of the Leeward islands, procured for him by Lord Lystleton. — His genius, however, could not be suppressed by any reverse of fortune. — He resumed his usual cheerfulness, and never abated one article in his way of living: which, though simple, was genial and elegant. The profits arising from his works were not inconsiderable: his tragedy of *Agamemnon*, acted in 1738, yielded a good sum. — But his chief dependence was upon the late Prince of Wales, who sent him a handsome allowance, and honoured him with many marks of particular favour. — Notwithstanding this, however, he was refused a licence for his tragedy of *Edward and Eleonora*, which he had prepared for the stage in the year 1739.

Mr Thomson's next performance was the masque of *Alfred*, written jointly with Mr Mallet, by the command of the Prince of Wales, for the entertainment of his Royal Highness's court, at Clifden, his summer residence, in the year 1740. — Mr Thomson's poem, intitled the *Castle of Indolence*, was his last work published by himself: his tragedy of *Coriolanus* being only prepared for the theatre, when a fatal accident robbed the world of one of the best of men and the best of poets. He would commonly walk the distance between London and Richmond (where he lived), with any acquaintance that offered, with whom he might chat, and rest himself, or perhaps dine by the way. — One summer evening, being alone, in his walk from town to Hammer-smith, he had over-heated himself, and, in that condition, imprudently took a boat to carry him to Kew; apprehending no bad consequence from the chill air on the river, which his walk to his house towards the upper end of Kew-lane, had always hitherto prevented. — But now, the cold had so seized him, that the next day he found himself in a high fever. — This, however, by the use of proper medicines, was removed, so that he was thought to be out of danger; till the fine weather having tempted him to expose himself once more to the

evening dew, his fever returned with violence, and with such symptoms, as left no hopes of a cure.—His lamented death happened on the 27th of August, 1748.—His testamentary executors were the Lord Lyttleton, whose care of our poet's fortune and fame ceased not with his life; and Mr Mitchell, a gentleman equally noted for the truth and constancy of his private friendship, and for his address and spirit as a public minister.—By their united interest, the orphan play of *Coriolanus* was brought on the stage, to the best advantage; from the profits of which, and the sale of manuscripts and other effects, a handsome sum was remitted to his sisters.—His remains were deposited in the church of Richmond, under a plain stone, without any inscription. A handsome monument was erected to him in Westminster Abbey, in the year 1762, the charge of which was defrayed by the profits arising from a splendid edition of all his works in quarto; Mr Millar, the bookseller, who had purchased all Mr Thomson's copies, generously giving up his property on this grateful occasion.

having treated him as a poor man, and not as a
 noble knight in a rich tower. But however
 the old physician's opinion was removed, to his
 was thought to be a great deal of danger. In the due
 season of the year, the old physician was removed, to his
 new house, and he was not to be seen any more.

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P R O L O G U E.

*BOLD is the man t' who, in this nicer age,
Presumes to tread the chaste corrected stage.
Now, with gay tinsel arts, we can no more
Conceal the want of nature's sterling ore.
Our spells are vanish'd, broke our magic wand;
That us'd to waft you over sea and land.
Before your light the fairy people fade,
The demons fly—The ghost itself is laid.
In vain of martial scenes the loud alarms,
The mighty prompter thundering out to arms,
The playhouse posse clattering from afar,
The close-wedg'd battle, and the din of war.
Now even the senate seldom we convene;
The yawning fathers nod behind the scene.
Your taste rejects the glittering false sublime;
To sigh in metaphor, and die in rhyme.
High rant is tumbled from his gallery throne:
Description, dreams—nay, fancies are gone.
What shall we then? to please you how devise,
Whose judgment sits not in your ears and eyes?
Thrice happy! could we catch great Shakespeare's art,
To trace the deep recesses of the heart;
His simple plain sublime, to which is given
To strike the soul with darted flame from heaven:
Could we awake soft Otway's tender woe,
The pomp of verse and golden lines of Rowe.
We to your hearts apply: let them attend;
Before their silent candid bar we bend.
If warm'd they listen, 'tis our noblest praise;
If cold, they wither all the muse's boys.*

Dramatis Personæ.

TANCRED, Count of Lecce.

MATTEO SIFFREDI, Lord High Chancellor of Sicily.

Earl OSMOND, Lord High Constable of Sicily.

RODOLPHO, friend to Tancred, and captain of the guards.

SIGISMUNDA, daughter of Siffredi.

LAURA, sister of Rodolpho, and friend to Sigismunda.

Barons, Officers, Guards, &c.

SCENE, *The city of PALERMO in Sicily.*



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TANCRED and SIGISMUNDA.

ACT I. SCENE I.

SIGISMUNDA, LAURA.

SIGISMUNDA.

A fatal day to Sicily! the King
Approaches his last moments!
Lau. So his fear'd.

Sigis. The death of those distinguish'd by their
station,
But by their virtue more, awakes the mind
To solemn dread, and strikes a sadd'ning awe;
Not that we grieve for them; but for ourselves,
Left to the toil of life—And yet the best
Are, by the playful children of this world,
At once forgot, as they had never been.

Laura. 'Tis said—the heart is sometimes charg'd
With a prophetic sadness: such, methinks,
Now hangs on mine. The King's approaching death
Suggests a thousand fears! What troubles thence
May throw the state once more into confusion,
What sudden changes in my father's house
May rise, and part me from my dearest Tancred,
Alarms my thought.

Lau. The fears of love-sick fancy
Perversely busy to torment itself;
But be assur'd your father's steady friendship,
Join'd to a certain genius, that commands,
Not kneels to fortune, will support and cherish,
Here in the public eye of Sicily,
This—I may call him—his adopted son,
The noble Tancred, form'd to all his virtues.

Sigif. Ah form'd to charm his daughter!—This fair morn

Has tempted far the chase. Is he not yet Return'd?

Lau. No.—When your father to the King,
Who now expiring lyes, was call'd in haste,
He sent each way his messengers to find him;
With such a look of ardor and impatience,
As if this near event was to count Tancred
Of more importance than I comprehend.

Sigif. There lyes, my Laura, o'er my Tancred's birth
A cloud I cannot pierce. With princely accost,
Nay, with respect, which oft I have observ'd,
Stealing at times submissive o'er his features,
In Belmont's woods my father rear'd this youth—
Ah woods! where first my artless bosom learn'd
The sighs of love.—He gives him out the son
Of an old friend, a baron of Apulia,
Who in the late crusado bravely fell;
But then 'tis strange; is all his family,
As well as father, dead? and all their friends,
Except my sire, the generous good Siffredi?
Had he a mother, sister, brother left,
The last remain of kindred; with what pride,
What rapture, might they fly o'er earth and sea,
To claim this rising honour of their blood?
This bright unknown! this all accomplish'd youth!
Who charms—too much—the heart of Sigismunda?

Laura, perhaps your brother knows him better,
The friend and partner of his freest hours.
What says Rodolpho? Does he truly credit
This story of his birth?

Lau. He has sometimes, like you, his doubts; yet, when maturely weigh'd,
Believes it true. As for Lord Tancred's self,
He never entertain'd the slightest thought
That verg'd to doubt; but oft laments his state,
By cruel fortune so ill pair'd to yours.

Sigif. Merit like his, the fortune of the mind,



Beggars all wealth—then to your brother, Laura,
He talks of me?

Lau. Of nothing else. Howe'er
The talk begin, it ends with Sigismunda;
Their morning, noontide, and their evening walks
Are full of you; and all the woods of Belmont
Enamour'd with your name—

Sigisf. Away, my friends;
You flatter—yet the dear delusion charms.

Lau. No, Sigismunda, 'tis the strictest truth,
Nor half the truth, I tell you. Even with fondness
My brother talks for ever of the passion
That fires young Tancred's breast. So much it strikes
—him,

He praises love as if he were a lover.

He blames the false pursuits of vagrant youth,
Calls them gay folly, a mistaken struggle
Against best-judging nature. Heaven, he says,
In lavish bounty form'd the heart for love;
In love included all the finer seeds

Of honour, virtue, friendship, purest bliss—

Sigisf. Virtuous Rodolpho!

Lau. Then his pleasing theme
He varies to the praises of your lover—

Sigisf. And what, my Laura, says he on the subject?

Lau. He says that, tho' he were not nobly born,
Nature has form'd him noble, generous, brave,
Truly magnanimous, and warmly scorning
Whatever bears the smallest taint of baseness.
That every easy virtue is his own;
Not learnt by painful labour, but inspir'd,
Implanted in his soul—chiefly one charm
He in his graceful character observes;
That though his passions burn with high impatience,
And sometimes, from a noble heat of nature,
Are ready to fly off; yet the least check
Of ruling reason brings them back to temper,
And gentle softness.

Sigisf. True! O true, Rodolpho!
Blest be thy kindred worth for loving his!

He is all warmth, all amiable fire,
 All quick heroic ardor ! temper'd soft
 With gentleness of heart, and manly reason ! O
 If virtue were to wear a human form,
 To light it with her dignity and flame,
 Then softning mix her smiles and tender graces ;
 O she would chuse the person of my Tancred !
 Go on, my friend, go on, and ever praise him ;
 The subject knows no bounds, nor can I tire,
 While my breast trembles to that sweetest music !
 The heart of woman tastes no truer joy,
 Is never flatter'd with such dear enchantment—
 'Tis more than selfish vanity—as when
 She hears the praises of the man she loves,——

Lau. Madam, your father comes.

SCENE II.

SIFFREDI, SIGISMUNDA, LAURA.

Siff. to an attendant as he enters.] Lord Tancred then
 Is found?——

Att. My Lord, he quickly will be here.

I scarce could keep before him, tho' he bid me
 Speed on, to say he would attend your orders.

Siff. 'Tis well—retire—You, too, my daughter,
 leave me.

Sigis. I go, my father—But how fares the King?

Siff. He is no more. Gone to that awful state,
 Where kings the crown wear only of their virtues.

Sigis. How bright must then be his!—This stroke
 is sudden.
 He was this morning well, when to the chase
 Lord Tancred went.

Siff. 'Tis true. But at his years
 Death gives short notice—Drooping nature then,
 Without a gust of pain to shake it, falls,
 His death, my daughter, was that happy period
 Which few attain. The duties of his day
 Were all discharg'd, and grastfully enjoy'd
 Its noblest blessings; calm, as evening skies,

Tanc.
 Confirm

ACT I. SIGIS MOUNADTA. 25

Was his pure mind, and lighted up with hopes
That open heaven; when, for his last long sleep
Timely prepar'd, a lassitude of life,
A pleasing weariness of mortal joy,
Fell on his soul, and down he sunk to rest.
O may my death be such!—He but one wish
Left unfulfill'd, which was to see Count Tancred—

Sigis. To see Count Tancred!—Pardon me, my
Lord—

Siff. For what, my daughter?—But, with such
emotion,

Why did you start at mention of Count Tancred?

Sigis. Nothing—I only hoped the dying King
Might mean to make some generous just provision
For this your worthy charge, this noble orphan.

Siff. And he has done it largely—Leave me now—
I want some private conference with Lord Tancred—

SCENE III.

SIFFREDI alone.

My doubts are but too true—If these old eyes
Can trace the marks of love, a mutual passion
Has seiz'd, I fear, my daughter and this prince,
My sovereign now—Should it be so? Ah there,
There lurks a brooding tempest, that may shake
My long concerted scheme, to settle firm
The public peace and welfare, which the King
Has made the prudent basis of his will—
Away! unworthy views! you shall not tempt me
Nor interest, nor ambition shall seduce
My fixt resolve—perish the selfish thought,
Which our own good prefers to that of millions!
He comes—my king—unconscious of his fortune—

SCENE IV.

TANCRED, SIFFREDI.

Tanc. My Lord Siffredi, in your looks I read—
Confirm'd, the mournful news that fly abroad—

From tongue to tongue—We then, at last, have lost
The good old King?

Siff. Yes, we have lost a father!

The greatest blessing heaven bestows on mortals,
And seldom found amidst these wilds of time.

A good, a worthy king!—Hear me, my Tancred,

And I will tell thee, in a few plain words,

How he deserv'd that best, that glorious title.

'Tis nought complex, 'tis clear as truth and virtue.

He lov'd his people, deem'd them all his children;

The good exalted, and depress'd the bad.

He spurn'd the flattering crew, with scorn rejected

Their smooth advice that only means themselves,

Their schemes to aggrandize him into baseness:

Nor did he less disdain the secret breath,

The whisper'd tale, that blights a virtuous name.

He fought alone the good of those for whom

He was entrusted with the sovereign power:

Well knowing that a people, in their rights

And industry protected, living safe

Beneath the sacred shelter of the laws,

Encourag'd in their genius, arts, and labours,

And happy each as he himself deserves,

Are ne'er ungrateful. With unsparing hand

They will for him provide: their filial love

And confidence are his unfailing treasure,

And every honest man his faithful guard.

Tanc. A general face of grief o'er spreads the city,

I mark'd the people, as I hither came,

In crouds assembled, struck with silent sorrow,

And pouring forth the noblest praise of tears.

Those, whom remembrance of their former woes,

And long experience of the vain illusions

Of youthful hope, had into wise consent

And fear of change corrected, wrung their hands,

And often casting up their eyes to Heaven,

Gave sign of sad conjecture. Others shew'd,

Athwart their grief, or real or affected,

A gleam of expectation, from what chance

And change might bring. A mingled murmur run

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Along the streets; and, from the lonely court
Of him who can no more assist their fortunes,
I saw the courtier-fry, with eager haste,
All hurrying to Constantia.

Siff. Noble youth!

I joy to hear from thee these just reflections,
Worthy of riper years—But if they seek
Constantia, trust me, they mistake their course.

Tanc. How! is she not, my Lord, the late king's sister,
Heir to the crown of Sicily? the last
Of our fam'd Norman line, and now our queen?

Siff. Tancred, 'tis true; she is the late king's sister,
The sole surviving offspring of that tyrant
William the bad—so for his vices stiled;
Who spilt much noble blood, and sore oppress'd
Th' exhausted land: whence grievous war arose,
And many a dire convulsion shook the state.
When he, whose death Sicily mourns to-day,
William, who has and well deserv'd the name
Of *Good*, succeeding to his father's throne,
Reliev'd his country's woes—But to return—
She is the late king's sister, born some months
After the tyrant's death, but not next heir.

Tanc. You much surprise me—may I then presume
To ask who is?

Siff. Come nearer, noble Tancred,
Son of my care! I must, on this occasion,
Consult thy generous heart; which, when conducted
By rectitude of mind and honest virtues,
Gives better counsel than the hoary head—
Then know, there lives a prince, here in Palermo,
The lineal offspring of our famous hero,
Roger the first.

Tanc. Great Heaven!—How far remov'd
From that our mighty founder?

Siff. His great grandson:
Sprung from his eldest son, who died untimely,
Before his father.

Tanc. Ha! the prince you mean,
Is he not Manfred's son? the generous, brave,

Unhappy Manfred ! whom the tyrant William,
You just now mention'd, not content to spoil
Of his paternal crown, threw into fetters,
And infamously murder'd.

Siff. Yes—the same.

Tanc. By heavens ! I joy to find our Norman reign,
The world's sole light amidst these barbarous ages !
Yet rears its head ; and shall not, from the lance,
Pass to the feeble distaff—but this prince
Where has he lain conceal'd ?

Siff. The late good king,
By noble pity mov'd, contriv'd to save him
From his dire father's unrelenting rage ;
And had him rear'd in private, as became
His birth and hopes with high and princely nurture,
Till now, too young to rule a troubled state,
By civil broils most miserably torn,
He in his safe retreat has lain conceal'd,
His birth and fortune to himself unknown ;
But when the dying king to me entrusted,
As to the chancellor of the realm, his will,
His successor he named him.

Tan. Happy youth !

He then will triumph o'er his father's foes,
O'er haughty Osmond, and the tyrant's daughter.

Siff. Ay, that is what I dread—that heat of youth ;
There lurks, I fear, perdition to the state ;
I dread the horrors of rekindled war :
Tho' dead, the tyrant still is to be fear'd ;
His daughter's party still is strong, and numerous :
Her friend, Earl Osmond, constable of Sicily,
Experienc'd, brave, high-born, of mighty interest.
Better the prince and princess should by marriage
Unite their friends, their interest and their claims ;
Then will the peace and welfare of the land
On a firm basis rise.

Tanc. My Lord Siffredi,
If by myself I of this prince may judge,
That scheme will scarce succeed—your prudent age
In vain will counsel, if the heart forbid it—

But wherefore fear? The right is clearly his;
 And, under your direction, with each man
 Of worth, and stedfast loyalty, to back
 At once the king's appointment and his birthright,
 There is no ground for fear. They have great odds,
 Against th' astonish'd sons of violence,
 Who fight with awful justice on their side.
 All Sicily will rouse, all faithful hearts
 Will range themselves around Prince Manfred's son.
 For me, I here devote me to the service
 Of this young prince; I every drop of blood
 Will lose with joy, with transport in his cause—
 Pardon my warmth—but that, my Lord, will never
 To this decision come—Then find the prince;
 Lose not a moment to awaken in him
 The royal soul. Perhaps he now desponding,
 Pines in a corner, and laments his fortune;
 That in the narrower bounds of private life
 He must confine his aims, those swelling virtues
 Which from his noble father he inherits.

Siff. Perhaps, regardless, in the common bane
 Of youth he melts in vanity and love.
 But if the seeds of virtue glow within him,
 I will awake a higher sense, a love
 That grasps the loves and happiness of millions.

Tanc. Why that surmise? Or should he love, *Siffreda*,
 I doubt not, it is nobly, which will raise
 And animate his virtues—O permit me,
 To plead the cause of youth—their virtue oft,
 In pleasure's soft enchantment lull'd a while,
 Forgets itself; it sleeps and gayly dreams,
 Till great occasion rouse it: then all flame,
 It walks abroad, with heighten'd soul and vigor,
 And by the change astonishes the world.
 Even with a kind of sympathy, I feel
 The joy that waits this prince; when all the powers,
 Th' expanding heart can wish, of doing good;
 Whatever swells ambition, or exalts
 The human soul into divine emotions,
 All croud at once upon him.

Siff. Ah, my Tancred,
 Nothing so easy as, in speculation,
 And at a distance seen, the course of honour,
 A fair delightful champion strew'd with flowers.
 But when the practice comes; when our fond passion,
 Pleasure, and pride, and self-indulgence, throw
 Their magic dust around, the prospect roughens:
 Then dreadful passes, craggy mountains rise,
 Cliffs to be scal'd, and torrents to be stem'd:
 Then toil ensues, and perseverance stern;
 And endless combats with our grosser sense,
 Oft lost, and oft renew'd; and generous pain
 For others felt; and, harder lesson still!
 Our honest bliss for others sacrific'd;
 And all the rugged task of virtue quails
 The stoutest heart of common resolution.
 Few get above this turbid scene of strife,
 Few gain the summit, breathe that purest air,
 That heavenly ether, which untroubled sees
 The storm of vice and passion rage below.

Tanc. Most true, my Lord. But why thus augure ill?
 You seem to doubt this prince. I know him not.
 Yet oh, methinks, my heart could answer for him!
 The juncture is so high, so strong the gale
 That blows from Heaven, as thro' the deadeast soul
 Might breathe the godlike energy of virtue.

Siff. Hear him, immortal shades of his great fathers!
 Forgive me, Sir, this trial of your heart:
 Thou! thou art he!

Tanc. Siffredi!

Siff. Tancred, thou!
 Thou art the man, of all the many thousands
 That toil upon the bosom of this isle,
 By Heaven elected to command the rest,
 To rule, protect them, and to make them happy!

Tanc. Manfred my father! I the last support
 Of the famed Norman line, that awes the world!
 I! who this morning wander'd forth an orphan,
 Outcast of all but thee, my second father!
 Thus call'd to glory! to the first great lot

Of human kind!—O wonder-working hand
 That, in majestic silence, sways at will
 The mighty movements of unbounded nature!
 O grant me, Heaven! the virtues to sustain
 This awful burden of so many heroes!
 Let me not be exalted into shame,
 Set up the worthless pageant of vain grandeur.

Mean-time I thank the justies of the king,
 Who has my right bequeath'd me. Thee, Siffredi,
 I thank thee—O I ne'er enough can thank thee!
 Yes, thou hast been—thou art—shalt be my father!
 Thou shalt direct my unexperien'd years,
 Shalt be the ruling head, and I the hand.

Siff. It is enough for me—to see my sovereign
 Assert his virtues, and maintain his honour.

Tanc. I think, my Lord, you said the king committed
 To you his will. I hope it is not clogg'd
 With any base conditions, any clause,
 To tyrannise my heart, and to Constantia
 Enslave my hand devoted to another.
 The hint you just now gave of that alliance,
 You must imagine, wakes my fear. But know,
 In this alone I will not bear dispute,
 Not even from thee, Siffredi!—Let the council
 Be strait assembled, and the will there open'd:
 Thence issue speedy orders to convene,
 This day ere noon, the Senate: where those Barons,
 Who now are in Palermo, will attend
 To pay their ready homage to the King,
 Their rightful king, who claims his native crown,
 And will not be a king by deeds and parchments.

Siff. I go, my Liege. But once again permit me
 To tell you—Now, now, is the trying crisis,
 That must determine of your future reign.
 O with heroic rigor watch your heart!
 And to the sovereign duties of a king,
 Th' unequal'd pleasures of a God on earth,
 Submit the common joys, the common passions,
 Nay, even the virtues of the private man.

Tanc. Of that no more. They not oppose, but aid,

Invigorate, cherish, and reward each other.
The kind all-ruling Wisdom is no tyrant.

S C E N E V.

TANCRED *alone.*

Now, generous Sigismunda, comes my turn
To shew my love was not of thine unworthy;
When fortune bade me blush to look to thee.
But what is fortune to the wish of love?
A miserable bankrupt! O, 'tis poor,
'Tis scanty all, whate'er we can bestow!
The wealth of kings is wretchedness and want!
Quick let me find her! taste that highest joy,
Th' exalted heart can know, the mixt effusion
Of gratitude and love!—Behold, she comes!

S C E N E VI.

TANCRED, SIGISMUNDA.

Tanc. My fluttering soul was all on wing to find thee,
My love! my Sigismunda!

Sigif. O my Tancred!
Tell me, what means this mystery and gloom
That low'rs around. Just now involv'd in thought
Thy father shot athwart me—You, my Lord,
Seem strangely mov'd—I fear some dark event
From the king's death to trouble our repose,
That tender calm we in the woods of Belmont
So happily enjoy'd—Explain this hurry,
What means it? Say.

Tanc. It means that we are happy!
Beyond our most romantic wishes, happy!

Sigif. You but perplex me more.

Tanc. It means, my fairest!
That thou art queen of Sicily; and I
The happiest of mankind! than monarch more!
Because with thee I can adorn my throne.
Manfred, who fell by tyrant William's rage,
Famed Roger's lineal issue, was my father. [Pausing

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You droop, my love; dejected on a sudden;
You seem to mourn my fortune.—The soft tear
Springs in thy eye—O let me kiss it off—

Why this, my Sigismunda?

Sigis. Royal Tancred,
None at your glorious fortune can like me
Rejoice;—yet me alone, of all Sicilians,
It makes unhappy.

Tanc. I should hate it then!
Should throw, with scorn, the splendid ruin from me!—
No, Sigismunda, 'tis my hope with thee
To share it, whence it draws its richest value.

Sigis. You are my sovereign—I at humble distance—

Tanc. Thou art my queen! the sovereign of my soul!
You never reign'd with such triumphant lustre,
Such winning charms as now; yet, thou art still
The dear, the tender, generous Sigismunda!
Who, with a heart exalted far above
Those selfish views, that charm the common breast,
Stoop'd from the height of life, and courted beauty,
Then, then, to love me, when I seem'd of fortune
The hopeless outcast, when I had no friend,
None to protect and own me but thy father.
And wouldst thou claim all goodness to thyself?
Canst thou thy Tancred deem so dully form'd,
Of such gross clay, just as I reach the point—
A point my wildest hopes could never image—
In that great moment, full of every virtue,
That I should then so mean a traitor prove
To the best bliss and honour of mankind,
So much disgrace the human heart, as then,
For the dead form of flattery and pomp,
The faithless joys of courts, to quit kind truth,
The cordial sweets of friendship and of love,
The life of life! my all, my Sigismunda!
I could upbraid thy fears, call them unkind,
Cruel, unjust, an outrage to my heart,
Did they not spring from love.

Sigis. Think not, my Lord,
That to such vulgar doubts I can descend.

Your heart, I know, disdains the little thought
 Of changing with the vain external change
 Of circumstance and fortune. Rather thence
 It would, with rising ardour, greatly feel
 A noble pride to shew itself the same.
 But, ah! the hearts of kings are not their own.
 There is a haughty duty that subjects them
 To chains of state, to wed the public welfare,
 And not indulge the tender private virtues.
 Some high-descended princefs, who will bring
 New power and interest to your throne, demands
 Your royal hand—perhaps Constantia.——

Tanc. She!

O name her not! were I this moment free,
 And disengag'd, as he who never felt
 The powerful eye of beauty, never sigh'd
 For matchless worth like thine, I should abhor
 All thoughts of that alliance. Her fell father
 Most basely murder'd mine; and she his daughter,
 Supported by his barbarous party, still
 His pride inherits, his imperious spirit
 And insolent pretensions to my throne:
 And canst thou deem me then so poorly tame,
 So cool a traitor to my father's blood,
 As from the prudent cowardice of state
 E'er to submit to such a base proposal?
 Detested thought! O doubly, doubly hateful!
 From the two strongest passions; from aversion
 To this Constantia—and from love to thee.

Custom, 'tis true, a venerable tyrant,
 O'er servile man extends her blind dominion:
 The pride of kings enslaves them; their ambition,
 Or interest, lords it o'er the better passions.
 But vain their talk, mask'd under specious words
 Of station, duty, and of public good:
 They whom just Heaven has to a throne exalted,
 To guard the rights and liberties of others,
 What duty binds them to betray their own?
 For me, my free-born heart shall bear no dictates,
 But those of truth and honour; wear no chains,

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But the dear chains of love and Sigismunda!
Or if indeed my choice must be directed
By views of public good, whom shall I chuse
So fit to grace, to dignify a crown,
And beam sweet mercy on a happy people,
As thee, my love? whom place upon my throne.
But thee, descended from the good Siffredi?
'Tis fit that heart be thine, which drew from him
Whate'er can make it worthy thy acceptance.

Sigis. Cease, cease, to raise my hopes above my duty;
Charm me no more, my Tancred!—O that we
In those blest woods, where first you won my soul,
Had pass'd our gentle days; far from the toil
And pomp of courts! such is the wish of love;
Of love, that, with delightful weakness, knows
No bliss and no ambition but itself.
But in the world's full light, those charming dreams,
Those fond illusions vanish. Awful duties,
The tyranny of men, even your own heart,
Where lurks a sense your passion stifles now,
And proud imperious honour call you from me.
'Tis all in vain—you cannot hush a voice
That murmurs here—I must not be persuaded!

Tanc. [kneeling.] Hear me, thou soul of all my
hopes and wishes!
And witness, Heaven! prime source of love and joy!
Not a whole warring world combin'd against me;
Its pride, its splendor, its imposing forms,
Nor interest, nor ambition, nor the face
Of solemn state, not even thy father's wisdom,
Shall ever shake my faith to Sigismunda.

[Trumpets and acclamations heard.]

But, hark! the public voice to duties call me,
Which with unweary'd zeal I will discharge;
And thou, yes thou, shalt be my bright reward.—
Yet—ere I go—to hush thy lovely fears,
Thy delicate objections—
Take this blank,
Sign'd with my name, and give it to thy father;
Tell him, 'tis my command, it be fill'd up

With a most strict and solemn marriage-contract.
How dear each tie ! how charming to my soul !
That more unites me to my Sigismunda.

For thee and for my people's good to live,
Is all the bliss which sovereign power can give.

ACT II. SCENE I.

SIFFREDI *alone.*

SO far 'tis well—The late King's will proceeds
Upon the plan I counsel'd ; that Prince Tancred
Should make Constantia partner of his throne.
O great, O wish'd event ! whence the dire seeds
Of dark intestine broils, of civil war,
And all its dreadful miseries and crimes,
Shall be for ever rooted from the land.
May these dim eyes, long blasted by the rage
Of cruel faction and my country's woes,
Tir'd with the toils and vanities of life,
Behold this period, then be clos'd in peace !

But how this mighty obstacle surmount,
Which Love has thrown betwixt ? Love that disturbs
The schemes of Wisdom still ; that, wing'd with passion,
Blind and impetuous in its fond pursuits,
Leaves the grey-headed Reason far behind.
Alas ! how frail the state of human bliss !
When even our honest passions oft destroy it.
I was to blame, in solitudes and shades,
Infectious scenes ! to trust their youthful hearts.
Would I had mark'd the rising flame ! that now
Burns out with dangerous force—My daughter owns
Her passion for the King ; she trembling own'd it,
With prayers and tears, and tender supplications,
That almost shook my firmness—And this blank,
Which his rash fondness gave her, shews how much,
To what a wild extravagance he loves—
I see no means—it foils my deepest thought—
How to controul this madness of the King,

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That wears the face of virtue, and will thence
Disdain restraint, will from his generous heart
Borrow new rage, even speciously oppose
To reason, reason—But it must be done.

My own advice, of which I more and more
Approve, the strict conditions of the will,
Highly demand his marriage with Constantia;
Or else her party has a fair pretence—
And all, at once, is horror and confusion—
How issue from this maze?—The crouding barons,
Here summon'd to the palace, meet already,
To pay their homage, and confirm the will.
On a few moments hangs the public fate,
On a few hasty moments—Ha! there shone
A gleam of hope—Yes—with this very paper
I yet will save him—Necessary means
For good and noble ends can ne'er be wrong,
In that resistless, that peculiar case,
Deceit is truth and virtue—But how hold
This lion in the toil?—O I will form it
Of such a fatal thread, twist it so strong
With all the ties of honour and of duty,
That his most desperate fury shall not break
The honest snare—Here is the royal hand—
I will beneath it write a perfect, full,
And absolute agreement to the will;
Which read before the nobles of the realm
Assembled, in the sacred face of Sicily,
Constantia present, every heart and eye
Fix'd on their monarch, every tongue applauding,
He must submit, his dream of love must vanish—
It shall be done!—To me, I know, 'tis ruin;
But safety to the public, to the King.
I will not reason more, I will not listen
Even to the voice of honour—No—'tis fix'd!
I here devote me for my prince and country;
Let them be safe, and let me nobly perish!

Behold, Earl Osmond comes; without whose aid
My schemes are all in vain.

S C E N E II

OSMOND, SIFFREDI.

Osmon. My Lord Siffredi,

I from the council hasten'd to Constantia,
 And have accomplish'd what we there propos'd.
 The Princess to the will submits her claims.
 She with her presence means to grace the senate,
 And of your royal charge, young Tancred's hand,
 Accept. At first, indeed, it shock'd her hopes
 Of reigning sole, this new surprising scene
 Of Manfred's son, appointed by the King
 With her joint-heir—But I so fully shew'd
 The justice of the case, the public good
 And sure establish'd peace which thence would rise,
 Join'd to the strong necessity that urg'd her,
 If on Sicilia's throne she meant to sit,
 As to the wise disposal of the will
 Her high ambition tamed. I methought, besides,
 I could discern that not from prudence merely
 She to this choice submitted.

Siff. Noble Osmond,
 You have in this done to the public great
 And signal service. Yes, I must avow it;
 This frank and ready instance of your zeal,
 In such a trying crisis of the state,
 When interest and ambition might have warp'd
 Your views; I own, this truly generous virtue
 Upbraids the rashness of my former judgment.

Osmon. Siffredi, no.—To you belongs the praise;
 The glorious work is yours. Had I not seiz'd,
 Improv'd the wish'd occasion to root out
 Division from the land, and save my country,
 I had been base, been infamous for ever.
 'Tis you, my Lord, to whom the many thousands
 That by the barbarous sword of civil war
 Had fallen inglorious, owe their lives; to you
 The sons of this fair isle, from her first peers
 Down to the swain who tills her golden plains,

Owe their safe homes, their soft domestic hours;
 And thro' late time posterity shall bless you,
 You who advis'd this will.—I blush to think
 I have so long oppos'd the best good man
 In Sicily.—With what impartial care
 Ought we to watch o'er prejudice and passion,
 Nor trust too much the jaundic'd eye of party!
 Henceforth its vain delusions I renounce,
 Its hot determinations, that confine
 All merit and all virtue to itself,
 To yours I join my hand; with you will own
 No interest and no party but my country.
 Nor is your friendship only my ambition:
 There is a dearer name, the name of father,
 By which I should rejoice to call Siffredi.
 Your daughter's hand would to the public weal
 Unite my private happiness.

Siff. My Lord,
 You have my glad consent. To be allied
 To your distinguish'd family, and merit,
 I shall esteem an honour. From my soul
 I here embrace Earl Osmond as my friend,
 And son.

Os. You make him happy. This assent,
 So frank and warm, to what I long have wish'd
 Engages all my gratitude; at once,
 In the first blossom, it matures our friendship:
 I from this moment vow myself the friend,
 And zealous servant of Siffredi's house.

Enter an OFFICER belonging to the court:

Off. to Siffredi.] The King, my Lord, demands your
 speedy presence.

Siff. I will attend him straight.—Farewell, my Lord:
 The senate meets; there, a few moments hence,
 I will rejoin you.

Os. There, my noble Lord,
 We will compleat this salutary work,
 Will there begin a new auspicious era.

SCENE III.

OSMOND, alone.

Siffredi gives his daughter to my wishes—

But does she give herself? Gay, young, and flatter'd,
 Perhaps engag'd, will she her youthful heart
 Yield to my harsher, uncomplying years?
 I am not form'd, by flattery and praise,
 By sighs and tears, and all the whining trade
 Of love, to feed a fair one's vanity;
 To charm at once and spoil her. These soft arts
 Nor suit my years nor temper; these be left
 To boys and doating age. A prudent father,
 By nature charg'd to guide and rule her choice,
 Relinquish his daughter to a husband's power,
 Who with superior dignity, with reason,
 And manly tenderness, will ever love her;
 Not first a kneeling slave, and then a tyrant.

SCENE IV.

OSMOND, BARONS.

Osmon. My Lords, I greet you well. This wondrous
 day

Unites us all in amity and friendship;
 We meet to-day with open hearts, and looks,
 Not gloom'd by party, scowling on each other,
 But all the children of one happy isle,
 The social sons of Liberty. No pride,
 No passion now, no thwarting views divide us:
 Prince Manfred's line, at last, to William's join'd;
 Combines us in one family of brothers.
 This to the late good king's well-order'd will,
 And wise Siffredi's generous care we owe.
 I truly give you joy. First of you all,
 I here renounce these errors and divisions
 That have so long disturb'd our peace, and seem'd
 Fermenting still, to threaten new commotions—

By time instructed let us not disdain
To quit mistakes. We all, my Lords, have err'd.
Men may, I find, be honest, tho' they differ.

1 Bar. Who follows not, my Lord, the fair example
You set us all, whate'er be his pretence,
Loves not with single and unbias'd heart
His country as he ought.

2 Bar. O-beauteous peace! What else, but thou,
Sweet union of a state! Gives safety, strength, and glory to a people!

I bow, Lord Constable, beneath the snow
Of many years; yet in my breast revives
A youthful flame. Methinks, I see again
Those gentle days renew'd, that bless'd our life,
Ere by this wasteful fury of division,
Worse than our Etna's most destructive fires,
It desolated sunk. I see our plains
Unbounded waving with the gifts of harvest;
Our seas with commerce throng'd, our busy ports
With chearful toil. Our Enna blooms afresh;
Afresh the sweets of thymy Hybla flow.
Our nymphs and shepherds, sporting in each vale,
Inspire new song, and wake the pastoral reed—
The tongue of age is found—Come, come, my sons;
I long to see this prince, of whom the world
Speaks largely well—His father was my friend,
The brave unhappy Manfred—Come, my Lords;
We tarry here too long.

SCENE V.

Two OFFICERS, *keeping off the croud.*

One of the croud.

Shew us our king,
The valiant Manfred's son, who lov'd the people—
We must, we will behold him—give us way.

1 Off. Pray, Gentlemen, give back—it must not be—
Give back, I pray—on such a glad occasion
I would not ill intreat the lowest of you.

2 MAN of the crowd. *(Sings and dances.)*

Nay, give us but a glimpse of our young king;
We more than any baron of them all
Will pay him true allegiance.

2 Off. Friends—indeed—
You cannot pass this way—we have strict orders,
To keep for him himself, and for the barons,
All these apartments clear—go to the gate
That fronts the sea, you there will find admission.

All. Long live King Tancred! Manfred's son—Huzzah!

(Crowd goes off.)

1 Off. I do not marvel at their rage of joy:
He is a brave and amiable prince.
When in my Lord Siffredi's house I liv'd,
Ere by his favour I obtain'd this office,
I there remember well the young count Tancred:
To see him and to love him were the same,
He was so noble in his ways, yet still
So affable and mild. Well, well, old Sicily,
Yet happy days await thee!

2 Off. Grant it, Heaven!
We have seen sad and troublous times enough.
He is, they say, to wed the late king's sister,
Constantia.

1 Off. Friend, of that I greatly doubt.
Or I mistake, or Lord Siffredi's daughter,
The gentle Sigismuda, has his heart.
If one may judge by kindly cordial looks,
And fond assiduous care to please each other,
Most certainly they love—O be they blest,
As they deserve! It were great pity aught
Should part a matchless pair: the glory he,
And she the blooming grace of Sicily!

2 Off. My Lord Rodolpho comes.

S C E N E V.

RODOLPHO, *from the senate.*

Rod. My honest friends,
You may retire. *(Officers go out.)*

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A storm is in the wind.
 This will perplexes all. No, Tancred never
 Can stoop to these conditions, which at once
 Attack his rights, his honour, and his love.
 Those wise old men, those plodding grave state-pedants,
 Forget the course of youth; their crooked prudence,
 To baseness verging still, forgets to take
 Into their fine-spun schemes the generous heart,
 That thro' the cobweb system bursting lays
 Their labours waste—so will this business prove,
 Or I mistake the king—back from the pomp
 He seem'd at first to shrink; and round his brow
 I mark'd a gathering cloud, when by his side,
 As if design'd to share the public homage,
 He saw the tyrant's daughter. But confess'd,
 At least to me, the doubling tempest frown'd,
 And shook his swelling bosom, when he heard
 Th' unjust, the base conditions of the will.
 Uncertain, tost in cruel agitation,
 He oft, methought, address'd himself to speak
 And interrupt Siffredi; who appear'd,
 With conscious haste, to dread that interruption,
 And hurry'd on.—But hark! I hear a noise,
 As if th' assembly rose!—Ha! Sigismunda,
 Oppress'd with grief, and wrapt in pensive sorrow,
 Passes along—

[*Sigismunda and Attendants pass thro' the
 back scene. Laura advances.*]

S C E N E VII.

RODOLPHO, LAURA.

Lau. Your high-prais'd friend, the King,
 Is false, most vilely false! The meanest slave
 Had shewn a nobler heart: nor grossly thus
 By the first bait ambition spread, been gull'd.
 He Manfred's son! away! it cannot be!
 The son of that brave prince could ne'er betray
 Those rights so long usurp'd from his great fathers,
 Which he, this day, by such amazing fortune,

Had just regain'd; he ne'er could sacrifice
 All faith, all honour, gratitude and love;
 Even just resentment of his father's fate,
 And pride itself; whate'er exalts a man
 Above the groveling sons of peasant-mud,
 All in a moment—and for what? why truly,
 For kind permission, gracious leave, to sit
 On his own throne with tyrant William's daughter!

Rod. I stand amaz'd—you surely wrong him, Laura,
 There must be some mistake.

Law. There can be none!
 Siffredi read his full and free consent
 Before th' applauding senate. True indeed,
 A small remain of shame, a timorous weakness,
 Even dastardly in falsehood, made him blush
 To act this scene in Sigismunda's eye,
 Who sunk beneath his perfidy and baseness.
 Hence, till to-morrow he adjourn'd the senate—
 To-morrow fix'd with infamy to crown him!
 Then, leading off his gay triumphant princeess,
 He left the poor unhappy Sigismunda,
 To bend her trembling steps to that sad home
 His faithless vows will render hateful to her—
 He comes—farewell—I cannot bear his presence!

S C E N E VIH.

TANCRED, SIFFREDI, RODOLPHO.

Tanc. entering, to Siffredi.] Avoid me, hoary traitor!

—Go, Rodolpho,

Give orders that all passages this way
 Be shut—Defend me from a hateful world,
 The bane of peace and honour—then return—

What! dost thou haunt me still? O monstrous insult!
 Unparallel'd indignity! Just Heaven!
 Was ever king, was ever man so treated?
 So trampled into baseness!

Siff. Here, my Liege,
 Here strike! I nor deserve, nor ask for mercy.

Tanc. Distraction!—O my soul—Hold, reason, hold!

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Thy giddy seat—O this inhuman outrage
Unhinges thought!

Siff. Exterminate thy servant!

Tanc. All, all but this I could have borne—but this!
This daring insolence beyond example!
This murderous stroke that stabs my peace for ever!
That wounds me there—there! where the human heart
Most exquisitely feels—

Siff. O bear it not,
My royal Lord, appease on me your vengeance!

Tanc. Did ever tyrant image aught so cruel?
The lowliest slave that crawls upon the earth,
Robb'd of each comfort Heaven bestows on mortals,
On the bare ground has still his virtue left,
The sacred treasures of an honest heart,
Which thou hast dar'd with rash audacious hand,
And impious fraud, in me to violate—

Siff. Behold, my Liege, that rash audacious hand,
Which not repents its crime—O glorious! happy!
If by my ruin I can save your honour.

Tanc. Such honour I renounce! with sovereign scorn,
Greatly detest it, and its mean adviser!
Hast thou not dared beneath my name to shelter—
My name for other purposes design'd,
Given from the fondness of a faithful heart,
With the best love o'erflowing—hast thou not
Beneath thy sovereign's name basely presum'd
To shield a lie? a lie! in public utter'd,
To all deluded Sicily? But know,
This poor contrivance is as weak as base.
In such a wretched toil none can be field
But fools and cowards—soon thy flimsy arts,
Touch'd by my just, my burning indignation,
Shall burst like threads in flame!—Thy doaring prudence
But more secures the purpose it would shake.
Had my resolves been wavering and doubtful,
This would confirm them, make them fix'd as fate;
This adds the only motive that was wanting
To urge them on through war and desolation—
What! marry her! Constantia! Her! the daughter

26 T. A N C R E D AND Act II.

Of the fell tyrant who destroy'd my father!
The very thought is madness! Ere thou seest
The torch of Hymen light these hated nuptials,
Thou shalt behold Sicilia wrapt in flames,
Her cities raz'd, her valleys drench'd with slaughter—
Love set aside—my pride assumes the quarrel.
My honour now is up; in spite of thee,
A world combin'd against me. I will give
This scatter'd Will in fragments to the winds,
Assert my rights, the freedom of my heart,
Crush all who dare oppose me to the dust,
And heap perdition on thee!

Siff. Sir, 'tis just.

Exhaust on me your rage; I claim it all.
But for those public threats thy passion utters,
'Tis what thou canst not do!

Tanc. I cannot! ha!

Driven to the dreadful brink of such dishonour,
Enough to make the tamest coward brave,
And into fierceness rouse the mildest nature,
What shall arrest my vengeance? who?

Siff. Thyself!

Tanc. Away! dare not to justify thy crime!
That, that alone can aggravate its horror,
Add insolence to insolence—perhaps
May make my rage forget—

Siff. O let it burst

On this grey head devoted to thy service!
But when the storm has vented all its fury,
Thou then must hear—nay more, I know, thou wilt—
Wilt hear the calm, yet stronger voice of reason.
Thou must reflect, that a whole people's safety,
The weal of trusted millions should bear down,
Thyself the judge, thy fondest partial pleasure.
Thou must reflect that there are other duties,
A nobler pride, a more exalted honour,
Superior pleasures far, that will oblige,
Compell thee, to abide by this my deed,
Unwarranted perhaps in common justice,
But which necessity, even virtue's tyrant,

Act II.

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VOL.

With awful voice commanded—Yes, thou must,
In calmer hours, divest thee of thy love,
These common passions of the vulgar breast,
This boiling heat of youth, and be a king!
The lover of thy people!

Tant. Truths ill-employed!
Abus'd to colour guilt! A king! a king!
Yes, I will be a king, but not a slave!
In this will be a king! in this my people
Shall learn to judge how I will guard their rights,
When they behold me vindicate my own.
But have I, say, been treated like a king?—
Heavens! could I stoop to such outrageous usage,
I were a mean, a shameless wretch, unworthy
To wield a sceptre in a land of slaves,
A soil, abhorr'd of virtue; should belye
My father's blood, belye those very maxims,
At other times, you taught my youth—*Siffredi!*
[In a softened tone of voice.]

Siff. Behold, my prince, behold thy poor old servant,
Whose darling care, these twenty years, has been
To nurse thee up to virtue; who for thee,
Thy glory and thy weal, renounces all,
All interest or ambition can pour forth;
What many a selfish father would pursue
Through treachery and crimes: behold him here,
Bent on his feeble knees, to beg, conjure thee,
With tears to beg thee, to controul thy passion,
And save thyself, thy honour, and thy people!
Kneeling with me behold the many thousands
To thy protection trusted: fathers, mothers,
The sacred front of venerable age,
The tender virgin, and the helpless infant;
The ministers of heaven, those who maintain,
Around thy throne, the majesty of rule;
And those whose labour, scorched by winds and sun,
Feeds the rejoicing public: see them all,
Here at thy feet, conjuring thee to save them,
From misery and war, from crimes and rapine!
Can there be aught, kind Heaven! in self-indulgence

To weigh down these?—this aggregate of love,
 With which compar'd the dearest private passion
 Is but the wasted dust upon the balance?
 Turn not away—Oh is there not some part,
 In thy great heart, so sensible to kindness,
 And generous warmth, some nobler part, to feel
 The prayers and tears of these, the mingled voice
 Of heaven and earth?

Tanc. There is! and thou hast touch'd it.
 Rise, rise, Siffredi—Oh! thou hast undone me,
 Unkind old man! O ill-entreated Tancred!
 Which way soe'er I turn, dishonour tears
 Her hideous front—and misery and ruin
 Was it for this you took such care to form me?
 For this imbued me with the quickest sense
 Of shame; these finer feelings, that ne'er vex
 The common mass of mortals, dully happy
 In blest insensibility? O rather
 You should have fear'd my heart; taught me that power
 And splendid interest lord it still o'er virtue;
 That, gilded by prosperity and pride,
 There is no shame, no meanness: temper'd thus,
 I had been fit to rule a venal world.
 Alas! what meant thy wantonness of prudence?
 Why have you rais'd this miserable conflict
 Betwixt the duties of the king and man?
 Set virtue against virtue?—Ah, Siffredi!
 'Tis thy superfluous, thy unfeeling wisdom,
 That has involv'd me in a maze of error,
 Almost beyond retreat—But hold, my soul,
 Thy steady purpose—Tost by various passions,
 To this eternal anchor keep—There is,
 Can be no public without private virtue—
 Then mark me well, observe what I command;
 It is the sole expedient now remaining—
 To-morrow, when the senate meets again,
 Unfold the whole, unravel the deceit;
 Nor that alone, try to repair its mischief;
 There call thy power, thy eloquence and interest
 Exert, to reinstate me in my rights,

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And from thy own dark snares to disembroil me.—
Start not, my Lord.—This must and shall be done!
Or here our friendship ends.—Howe'er disguis'd,
Whatever thy pretence, thou art a traitor.

Siff. I should indeed deserve the name of traitor,
And even a traitor's fate, had I so slightly
From principles so weak, done what I did,
As e'er to disavow it—

Tanc. Ha!

Siff. My Liege,
Expect not this.—Though practis'd long in courts,
I have not so far learn'd their subtle trade,
To veer obedient with each gust of passion.
I honour thee, I venerate thy orders,
But honour more my duty. Nought on earth
Shall ever shake me from that solid rock,
Nor smiles nor frowns.—

Tanc. You will not then?

Siff. I cannot!

Tanc. Away! begone!—O my Rodolpho, come,
And save me from this traitor!—Hence, I say,
Avoid my presence strait! and know, old man,
Thou my worst foe beneath the mask of friendship,
Who, not content to trample in the dust
My dearest rights, dost with cool insolence
Persist, and call it duty; hadst thou not
A daughter that protects thee, thou shouldst feel
The vengeance thou deservest—No reply!
Away!

S C E N E IX.

TANCRED, RODOLPHO.

Rod. What can incense my prince so highly
Against his friend Siffredi?

Tanc. Friend! Rodolpho?
When I have told you what this friend has done,
How play'd me like a boy, a base-born wretch,
Who had nor heart nor spirit! thou wilt stand
Amaz'd, and wonder at my stupid patience.

Rod. I heard, with mixt astonishment and grief,
The king's unjust dishonourable will,
Void in itself—I saw you stung with rage,
And writhing in the snare; just as I went,
At your command, to wait you here—but that
Was the king's deed, not his.

Tanc. O he advis'd it! These many years he has in secret hatch'd
This black contrivance, glories in the scheme,
And proudly plumes him with his traiterous virtue.
But that was nought, Rodolpho, nothing, nothing!
O that was gentle, blameless, to what follow'd!
I had, my friend, to Sigismunda given,
To hush her fears, in the full gush of fondness,
A blank sign'd by my hand—and he—O heavens!
Was ever such a wild attempt!—he wrote
Beneath my name an absolute compliance
To this detested Will; nay, dared to read it
Before myself, on my insulted throne
His idle pageant plac'd—O words are weak
To paint the pangs, the rage, the indignation,
That whirl'd from thought to thought my soul in tempest,
Now on the point to burst, and now by shame
Repress'd—But in the face of Sicily,
All mad with acclamation, what, Rodolpho,
What could I do? The sole relief that rose
To my distracted mind, was to adjourn
Th' assembly till to-morrow—But to-morrow
What can be done?—O it avails not what!
I care not what is done—My only care
Is how to clear my faith to Sigismunda.

She thinks me false! She cast a look that kill'd me!
O I am base in Sigismunda's eye!

The lowest of mankind, the most perfidious!

Rod. This was a strain of insolence indeed;
A daring outrage of so strange a nature,
As stuns me quite—

Tanc. Curs'd be my timid prudence!
That dash'd not back, that moment, in his face,
The bold presumptuous lie—and curs'd this hand!

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That from a start of poor dissimulation,
 Eed off my Sigismunda's hated rival;
 Ah then! what, poison'd by the false appearance,
 What, Sigismunda, were thy thoughts of me?
 How, in the silent bitterness of soul,
 How didst thou scorn me! hate mankind, thyself,
 For trusting to the vows of faithless Tancred!
 For such I seem'd—I was!—The thought distracts me!
 I should have cast a flattering world aside,
 Rush'd from my throne, before them all avow'd her,
 The choice, the glory of my free-born heart,
 And spurn'd the shameful fetters thrown upon it—
 Instead of that—confusion!—what I did
 Has clench'd the chain, confirm'd Siffredi's crime,
 And fix'd me down to infamy!

Rod. My Lord,
 Blame not the conduct, which your situation
 Tore from your tortur'd heart—What could you do?
 Had you, so circumstanc'd, in open senate,
 Before th' astonish'd public, with no friends
 Prepar'd, no party form'd, affronted thus
 The haughty princess and her powerful faction,
 Supported by this will, the sudden stroke,
 Abrupt and premature, might have recoil'd
 Upon yourself, even your own friends revolted,
 And turn'd at once the public scale against you.
 Besides, consider had you then detected
 In its fresh guilt this action of Siffredi,
 You must with signal vengeance have chastis'd
 The treasonable deed—Nothing so mean
 As weak insulted power that dares not punish.
 And how would that have suited with your love?
 His daughter present too? Trust me, your conduct,
 Howe'er abhorrent to a heart like yours,
 Was fortunate and wise—Not that I mean
 E'er to advise submission—

Tanc. Heavens! submission!
 Could I descend to bear it; even in thought,
 Despise me, you, the world, and Sigismunda!
 Submission! no!—To-morrow's glorious light

Shall flash discovery on this scene of baseness,
 Whatever be the risque, by heavens! to-morrow,
 I will o'erturn the dirty lie-built schemes
 Of these old men, and shew my faithful senate,
 That Manfred's son knows to assert and wear,
 With undiminis'd dignity, that crown
 This unexpected day has plac'd upon him.

But this, my friend, these stormy gusts of pride
 Are foreign to my love—Till Sigismunda
 Be disabus'd, my breast is tumult all,
 And can obey no settled course of reason.
 I see her still, I feel her powerful image,
 That look, where with reproach complaint was mix'd,
 Big with soft woe and gentle indignation,
 Which seem'd at once to pity and to scorn me—
 O let me find her! I too long have lost
 My Sigismunda to converse with tears,
 A prey to thoughts that picture me a villain.
 But ah! how, clogg'd with this accursed state,
 A tedious world, shall I now find access?
 Her father too—Ten thousand horrors crowd
 Into the wild fantastic eye of love—
 Who knows what he may do? Come then, my friend;
 And by thy sister's hand O let me steal
 A letter to her bosom—I no longer
 Can bear her absence, by the just contempt
 She now must brand me with, inflam'd to madness.
 Fly, my Rodolpho, fly! engage thy sister
 To aid my letter, and this very evening
 Secure an interview—I would not bear
 This rack another day, not for my kingdom!
 Till then deep-plung'd in solitude and shades,
 I will not see the hated face of man.

Thought drives on thought, on passions passions roll;
 Her smiles alone can calm my raging soul.

ACT III. SCENE I.

SIGISMUNDA *alone, sitting in a disconsolate posture.*

AH tyrant prince ! ah more than faithless Tancred !
 Ungenerous and inhuman in thy falsehood !
 Hadst thou, this morning, when my hopeless heart,
 Submissive to my fortune and my duty,
 Had so much spirit left, as to be willing
 To give thee back thy vows, ah ! hadst thou then
 Confess'd the sad necessity thy state
 Impos'd upon thee, and with gentle friendship,
 Since we must part at last, our parting soften'd :
 I should indeed—I should have been unhappy,
 But not to this extreme—Amidst my grief,
 I had, with pensive pleasure, cherish'd still
 The sweet remembrance of thy former love ;
 Thy image still had dwelt upon my soul,
 And made our guiltless woes not undelightful.
 But coolly thus—How couldst thou be so cruel ?—
 Thus to revive my hopes, to soothe my love
 And call forth all its tenderness, then sink me
 In black despair—What unrelenting pride
 Possess'd thy breast, that thou couldst bear unmov'd
 To see me bent beneath a weight of shame ?
 Pangs thou canst never feel ? How couldst thou drag me
 In barbarous triumph at a rival's car ?
 How make me witness to a sight of horror ?
 That hand, which, but a few short hours ago,
 So wantonly abus'd my simple faith,
 Before th' attesting world given to another,
 Irrevocably given !—There was a time,
 When the least cloud that hung upon my brow,
 Perhaps imagin'd only, touch'd thy pity.
 Then, brighten'd often by the ready tear,
 Thy looks were softness all ; then the quick heart,
 In every nerve alive, forgot itself,
 And for each other then we felt alone.

But now, alas! those tender days are fled;
 Now thou canst see me wretched, pierc'd with anguish,
 With studied anguish of thy own creating,
 Nor wet thy harden'd eye—Hold, let me think—
 I wrong thee sure; thou canst not be so base,
 As meanly in my misery to triumph.
 What is it then? Why should I search for pain?—
 O 'tis as bad!—'Tis fickleness of nature,
 'Tis sickly love extinguish'd by ambition—
 Is there, kind Heaven, no constancy in man?
 No steadfast truth, no generous fixt affection,
 That can bear up against a selfish world?
 No, there is none—Even Tancred is inconstant!

[*Rising.*]

Hence! let me fly this scene!—Whate'er I see,
 These roofs, these walls, each object that surrounds me,
 Are tainted with his vows—But whither fly?
 The groves are worse, the soft retreat of Belmont;
 Its deepening glooms, gay lawns, and airy summits,
 Will wound my busy memory to torture,
 And all its shades will whisper—faithless Tancred!—
 My father comes.—How, sunk in this disorder,
 Shall I sustain his presence?

S C E N E II.

SIFFREDI, SIGISMUNDA.

Siff. Sigismunda,
 My dearest child! I grieve to find thee thus
 A prey to tears: I know the powerful cause
 From which they flow, and therefore can excuse them;
 But not their wilful obstinate continuance.
 Come, rouse thee then, call up thy drooping spirit;
 Come, wake to reason from this dream of love,
 And shew the world thou art Siffredi's daughter.

Sigis. Alas! I am unworthy of that name.

Siff. Thou art indeed to blame; thou hast too rashly
 Engag'd thy heart, without a father's sanction.
 But this I can forgive. The king has virtues

That plead thy full excuse ; nor was I void
Of blame, to trust thee to those dangerous virtues.
Then dread not my reproaches. Tho' he blames,
Thy tender father pities more than blames thee.
Thou art my daughter still ; and, if thy heart
Will now resume its pride, assert itself,
And greatly rise superior to this trial,
I to my warmest confidence again
Will take thee, and esteem thee more my daughter.

Sigif. O you are gentler far than I deserve !
It is, it ever was, my darling pride,
To bend my soul to your supreme commands,
Your wisest will ; and tho', by love betray'd—
Alas ! and punish'd too—I have transgress'd
The nicest bounds of duty, yet I feel
A sentiment of tenderness, a source
Of filial nature springing in my breast,
That, should it kill me, shall controul this passion,
And make me all submission and obedience
To you, my honour'd Lord, the best of fathers.

Siff. Come to my arms, thou comfort of my age—
Thou only joy and hope of these grey hairs—
Come ! let me take thee to a parent's heart ;
There, with the kindly aid of my advice,
Even with the dew of these paternal tears,
Revive and nourish this becoming spirit—
Then thou dost promise me, my Sigismunda—
Thy father stoops to make it his request—
Thou wilt resign thy fond presumptuous hopes,
And henceforth never more indulge one thought
That in the light of love regards the King.

Sigif. Hopes I have none ! Those by this fatal day
Are blasted all—But from my soul to banish,
While weeping memory there retains her seat,
Thoughts which the purest bosom might have cherish'd,
Once my delight, now even in anguish charming,
Is more, alas ! my Lord, than I can promise.

Siff. Absence and time, the softner of our passions,
Will conquer this. Meantime, I hope from thee
A generous great effort ; that thou wilt now

Exert thy utmost force; nor languish thus
 Beneath the vain extravagance of love.
 Let not thy father blush to hear it said,
 His daughter was so weak, e'er to admit
 A thought so void of reason, that a king
 Should to his rank, his honour and his glory,
 The high important duties of a throne,
 Even to his throne itself, madly prefer
 A wild romantic passion, the fond child
 Of youthful dreaming thought and vacant hours;
 That he should quit his heaven-appointed station,
 Desert his awful charge, the care of all
 The toiling millions which this isle contains;
 Nay more, should plunge them into war and ruin:
 And all to soothe a sick imagination,
 A miserable weakness.——Must for thee,
 To make thee blest, Sicilia be unhappy?
 The King himself, lost to the nobler sense
 Of manly praise, become the piteous hero
 Of some soft tale, and rush on sure destruction?
 Canst thou, my daughter, let the monstrous thought
 Possess one moment thy perverted fancy?
 Rouse thee, for shame! and if a spark of virtue
 Lyes slumbering in thy soul, bid it blaze forth;
 Nor sink unequal to the glorious lesson.
 This day thy lover gave thee from his throne.

Sigif. Ah, that was not from virtue!—Had, my father,
 That been his aim, I yield to what you say;
 'Tis powerful truth, unanswerable reason.
 Then, then, with sad but dutious resignation,
 I had submitted as became your daughter;
 But in that moment, when my humbled hopes
 Were to my duty reconcil'd, to raise them
 To yet a fonder height than e'er they knew,
 Then rudely dash them down—There is the sting!
 The blasting view is ever present to me——
 Why did you drag me to a sight so cruel?

Siff. It was a scene to fire thy emulation.

Sigif. It was a scene of perfidy!—But know,
 I will do more than imitate the King——

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For he is false!—I, tho' sincerely pierc'd
With the best, truest passion, ever touch'd
A virgin's breast, here vow to Heaven and you,
Tho' from my heart I cannot, from my hopes
To cast this prince.—What would you more, my father?

Siff. Yes, one thing more—thy father then is happy—

Tho' by the voice of innocence and virtue
Absolv'd, we live not to ourselves alone:
A rigorous world, with peremptory sway,
Subjects us all, and even the noblest most.
This world from thee, my honour and thy own,
Demands one step; a step, by which convinc'd
The King may see thy heart disdains to wear
A chain which his has greatly thrown aside.
'Tis fitting too, thy sex's pride commands thee,
To shew th' approving world thou canst resign,
As well as he, nor with inferior spirit,
A passion fatal to the public weal.
But, above all, thou must root out for ever
From the King's breast the least remain of hope,
And henceforth make his mention'd love dishonour.
These things, my daughter, that must needs be done,
Can but this way be done—by the safe refuge,
The sacred shelter of a husband's arms.
And there is one—

Sigis. Good Heavens! what means my Lord?

Siff. One of illustrious family, high rank,
Yet still of higher dignity and merit,
Who can and will protect thee; one to awe
The King himself—Nay, hear me, Sigismunda—
The noble Osmond courts thee for his bride,
And has my plighted word—This day—

Sigis. kneeling.] My father!
Let me with trembling arms embrace thy knees!
O if you ever wish'd to see me happy;
If e'er in infant years I gave you joy,
When as I, prattling, twin'd around your neck,
You snatch'd me to your bosom, kiss'd my eyes,
And melting said you saw my mother there;
O save me from that worst severity

Of fate! O outrage not my breaking heart
 To that degree—I cannot!—’tis impossible!—
 So soon withdraw it, give it to another——
 Hear me, my dearest father! hear the voice
 Of Nature and Humanity, that plead
 As well as Justice for me!—Not to chuse
 Without your wise direction, may be duty;
 But still my choice is free—That is a right,
 Which even the lowest slave can never lose.
 And would you thus degrade me? make me base!
 For such it were, to give my worthless person
 Without my heart, an injury to Osmond,
 The highest can be done——Let me, my Lord——
 Or I shall die, shall by the sudden change
 Be to distraction shock’d—let me wear out
 My hapless days in solitude and silence,
 Far from the malice of a prying world!
 At least—you cannot sure refuse me this—
 Give me a little time—I will do all,
 All I can do to please you!—O your eye
 Sheds a kind beam——

Siff. My daughter! you abuse
 The softness of my nature——

Sigisf. Here, my father,
 Till you relent, here will I grow for ever!

Siff. Rise, Sigismunda.—Tho’ you touch my heart,
 Nothing can shake th’ inexorable dictates
 Of honour, duty, and determin’d reason.
 Then by the holy ties of filial love,
 Resolve, I charge thee, to receive Earl Osmond,
 As suits the man who is thy father’s choice,
 And worthy of thy hand.—I go to bring him——

Sigisf. Spare me, my dearest father!

Siff. aside.] I must rush
 From her soft grasp, or nature will betray me!

O grant us, Heaven! that fortitude of mind,
 Which listens to our duty, not our passions.——

Quit me, my child!

Sigisf. You cannot, O my father!
 You cannot leave me thus!

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ACT III. SIGISMUNDA.

Sig. Come hither, Laura.
Come to thy friend. Now shew thyself a friend.
Combate her weakness; dissipate her tears;
Cherish, and reconcile her to her duty.

SCENE III.

SIGISMUNDA, LAURA.

Sigif. O woe on woe! distress'd by love and duty!
O every way unhappy Sigismunda!

Lau. Forgive me, Madam, if I blame your grief.
How can you waste your tears on one so false?
Unworthy of your tenderness? to whom
Nought but contempt is due and indignation?

Sigif. You know not half the horrors of my fate!
I might perhaps have learn'd to scorn his falsehood;
Nay, when the first sad burst of tears was past,
I might have rous'd my pride, and scorn'd himself—
But 'tis too much, this greatest last misfortune—
O whither shall I fly? Where hide me, Laura,
From the dire scene my father now prepares!

Lau. What thus alarms you, Madam!

Sigif. Can it be?
Can I—ah no!—at once give to another
My violated heart? in one wild moment?
He brings Earl Osmond to receive my vows!
O dreadful change! for Tancred, haughty Osmond!

Lau. Now, on my soul, 'tis what an outrag'd heart,
Like yours, should wish—I should, by Heavens, esteem it
Most exquisite revenge!

Sigif. Revenge on whom?
On my own heart, already but too wretched!

Lau. On him! this Tancred! who has basely sold,
For the dull form of despicable grandeur,
His faith, his love!—At once a slave and tyrant!

Sigif. O rail at me, at my believing folly,
My vain ill-founded hopes, but spare him, Laura!

Lau. Who rais'd these hopes? who triumphs o'er that
weakness?

Pardon the word—You greatly merit him;
 Better than him, with all his giddy pomp!
 You rais'd him by your smiles when he was nothing!
 Where is your woman-pride? that guardian spirit
 Given us to dash the perfidy of man?
 Ye Powers! I cannot bear the thought with patience—
 Yet recent from the most unsparing vows
 The tongue of love ere lavish'd; from your hopes
 So vainly, idly, cruelly deluded;
 Before the public thus, before your father,
 By an irrevocable solemn deed,
 With such inhuman scorn, to throw you from him!
 To give his faithless hand, yet warm from thine,
 With complicated meanness, to Constantia!
 And to compleat his crime, when thy weak limbs
 Could scarce support thee, then, of thee regardless,
 To lead her off!

Sigis. That was indeed a fight
 To poison love! to turn it into rage
 And keen contempt!—What means this stupid weakness
 That hangs upon me? Hence, unworthy tears!
 Disgrace my cheek no more! No more my heart,
 For one so coolly false, or meanly fickle—
 O it imports not which—dare to suggest
 The least excuse!—Yes, traitor, I will wring
 Thy pride, will turn thy triumph to confusion!
 I will not pine away my days for thee,
 Sighing to brooks and groves; while, with vain pity,
 You in a rival's arms lament my fate—
 No! let me perish! ere I tamely be
 That soft, that patient, gentle Sigismunda,
 Who can console her with the wretched boast,
 She was for thee unhappy!—If I am,
 I will be nobly so!—Sicilia's daughters
 Shall wondering see in me a great example
 Of one who punish'd an ill-judging heart,
 Who made it bow to what it most abhor'd!
 Crush'd it to misery! for having thus
 So lightly listen'd to a worthless lover!

Lau. At last it mounts! the kindling pride of virtue!

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Trust me, thy marriage will embitter his.——

Sigif. O may the furies light his nuptial torch!
Be it accurs'd as mine! for the fair peace,
The tender joys of hymeneal love,
May jealousy awak'd, and fell remorse,
Pour all their fiercest venom thro' his breast!
Where the Fates lead, and blind Revenge, I follow!—
Let me not think—By injur'd Love! I vow,
Thou shalt, base Prince! perfidious, and inhuman!
Thou shalt behold me in another's arms!
In his thou hatest! Osmond's!

Lau. That will grind
His heart with secret rage! Ay, that will sting
His soul to madness! fet him up a terror,
A spectacle of woe to faithless lovers!
Your cooler thought, besides, will of the change
Approve, and think it happy. Noble Osmond
From the same stock with him derives his birth,
First of Sicilian barons, prudent, brave,
Of strictest honour, and by all rever'd.——

Sigif. Talk not of Osmond, but perfidious Tancred!
Rail at him, rail! invent new names of scorn!
Assist me, Laura; lend my rage fresh fuel;
Support my staggering purpose, which already
Begins to fail me—Ah, my vaunts how vain!
How have I ly'd to my own heart!—Alas!
My tears return, the mighty flood o'erwhelms me!
Ten thousand crouding images distract
My tortur'd thought.——And is it come to this?
Our hopes? our vows? our oft repeated wishes,
Breath'd from the fervent soul, and full of heaven,
To make each other happy?—come to this!

Lau. If thy own peace and honour cannot keep
Thy resolution fix'd, yet, Sigismunda,
O think, how deeply, how beyond retreat,
Thy father is engag'd.

Sigif. Ah wretched weakness!
That thus enthrals my soul, that chafes thence
Each nobler thought, the sense of every duty!——
And have I then no tears for thee, my father?

Can I forget thy cares, from helpless years,
 Thy tenderness for me? an eye still beam'd
 With love? a brow that never knew a frown?
 Nor a harsh word thy tongue? Shall I for these
 Repay thy stooping venerable age,
 With shame, disquiet, anguish and dishonour?
 It must not be!—Thou first of angels! come,
 Sweet filial piety! and firm my breast!
 Yes, let one daughter to her fate submit,
 Be nobly wretched—but her father happy!—
 Laura! they come!—O Heavens! I cannot stand
 The horrid trial!—Open, open, earth!
 And hide me from their view!

Lau. Madam!—

S C E N E IV.

SIFFREDI, OSMOND, SIGISMUNA, LAURA.

Siff. My daughter,

Behold my noble friend who courts thy hand,
 And whom to call my son I shall be proud;
 Nor shall I less be pleas'd in his alliance
 To see thee happy.

Ofm. Think not, I presume,
 Madam, on this your father's kind consent,
 To make me blest. I love you from a heart
 That seeks your good superior to my own;
 And will, by every art of tender friendship,
 Consult your dearest welfare. May I hope,
 Yours does not disavow your father's choice?

Sigif. I am a daughter, Sir—and have no power
 O'er my own heart.—I die—Support me, Laura. [*Faints.*]

Siff. Help—Bear her off.—She breathes—My
 daughter!—

Sigif. Oh!—

Forgive my weakness—soft—my Laura, lead me—
 To my apartment.

Siff. Pardon me, my Lord,
 If by this sudden accident alarm'd,
 I leave you for a moment.

S C E N E V.

OSMOND *alone.*

Let me think——

What can this mean?——Is it to me aversion?
 Or is it, as I fear'd, she loves another?
 Ha!—yes—perhaps the king, the young count Tancred?
 They were bred up together.——Surely that,
 That cannot be——Has he not given his hand
 In the most solemn manner to Constantia?
 Does not his crown depend upon the deed?
 No——if they lov'd, and this old statesman knew it,
 He could not to a king prefer a subject.
 His virtues I esteem—nay more, I trust them——
 So far as virtue goes—but could he place
 His daughter on the throne of Sicily!——
 O 'tis a glorious bribe, too much for man!——
 What is it then?——I sware not what it be.
 My honour now, my dignity demands,
 That my propos'd alliance, by her father,
 And even herself accepted, be not scorn'd.
 I love her too——I never knew till now,
 To what a pitch I lov'd her. O she shot
 Ten thousand charms into my inmost soul!!
 She look'd so mild, so amiably gentle,
 She bow'd her head, she glow'd with such confusion,
 Such loveliness of modesty! She is,
 In gracious mind, in manners, and in person,
 The perfect model of all female beauty!
 She must be mine——She is!——If yet her heart
 Consents not to my happiness, her duty,
 Join'd to my tender cares, will gain so much
 Upon her generous nature——That will follow.

The man of sense, who acts a prudent part,
 Not flattering steals, but forms himself the heart.

ACT IV. SCENE I.

The Garden belonging to SIFFREDI's house.

SIGISMUNDA, LAURA.

SIGISMUNDA, *with a letter in her hand.*

TIS done!—I am a slave!—The fatal vow
Has pass'd my lips!—Methought in these sad
moments,

The tombs around, the saints, the darken'd altar,
And all the trembling shrines with horror shook.

But here is still new matter of distress.

O Tancred, cease to persecute me more!

O grudge me not some calmer state of woe!

Some quiet gloom to shade my hopeless days,

Where I may never hear of love and thee!—

Has Laura too conspir'd against my peace?

Why did you take this letter?—Bear it back—

[Giving her the letter.]

I will not court new pain.

Lau. Madam, Rodolpho

Urg'd me so much, nay, even with tears conjur'd me,

But this once more to serve th' unhappy King—

For such he said he was—that tho' enrag'd,

Equal with thee, at his inhuman falsehood,

I could not to my brother's fervent prayers

Refuse this office.—Read it.—His excuses

Will only more expose his falsehood.

Sigif. No.

It suits not Osmond's wife to read one line

From that contagious hand—she knows too well!

Lau. He paints him out distress'd beyond expression,

Even on the point of madness. Wild as winds,

And fighting seas, he raves. His passions mix,

With ceaseless rage, all in each giddy moment.

He dies to see you and to clear his faith.

Sigif. Save me from that!—That would be worse than all!

Laur. I but report my brother's words; who then began to talk of some dark imposition, That had deceiv'd us all: when interrupted, We heard your father and Earl Osmond near, As summon'd to Constantia's court they went.

Sigif. Ha! imposition?—Well!—If I am doom'd To be o'er all my sex, the wretch of love, In vain I would resist—Give me the letter— To know the worst is some relief—Alas! It was not thus, with such dire palpitations, That, Tancred, once I us'd to read thy letters.

[*Attempting to read the letter, but gives it to Laura.*
Ah, fond remembrance blinds me!—Read it, *Laura*.

LAURA reads.

Deliver me, Sigismunda, from that most exquisite misery which a faithful heart can suffer—To be thought base by her, from whose esteem even virtue borrows new charms. When I submitted to my cruel situation, it was not falsehood you beheld, but an excess of love. Rather than endanger that, I for a while gave up my honour. Every moment till I see you stabs me with severer pangs than real guilt itself can feel. Let me then conjure you to meet me in the garden, towards the close of the day, when I will explain this mystery. We have been most inhumanly abused; and that by the means of the very paper which I gave you, from the warmest sincerity of love, to assure to you the heart and hand of

TANCRED.

Sigif. There, *Laura*, there, the dreadful secret sprung!

That paper! ah that paper! it suggests
A thousand horrid thoughts—I to my father
Gave it; and he perhaps—I dare not cast

A look that way—if yet indeed you love me,
 O blast me not, kind Tancred, with the truth!
 O pitying keep me ignorant for ever!
 What strange peculiar misery is mine?
 Reduc'd to with the man I love were false!
 Why was I hurry'd to a step so rash?
 Repairless woe!—I might have waited, sure,
 A few short hours—No duty that forbade—
 I lov'd thy love that justice; till this day
 Thy love an image of all-perfect goodness!
 A beam from Heaven that glow'd with every virtue!
 And have I thrown this prize of life away?
 The piteous wreck of one distracted moment?
 Ah the cold prudence of remorseless age!
 Ah parents, traitors to your children's bliss!
 Ah, curs'd, ah blind revenge!—On every hand
 I was betrayed—You, Laura, too, betray'd me!—

Lau. Who, who, but he, whate'er he writes, be-
 tray'd you?

Or false or pusillanimous. For once,
 I will with you suppose, that his agreement
 To the king's will was forg'd—Tho' forg'd by whom?
 Your father scorns the crime. Yet what avails it?
 This, if it clears his truth, condemns his spirit.
 A youthful king by love and honour fir'd,
 Patient to sit on his insulted throne,
 And let an outrage, of so high a nature,
 Unpunish'd pass, uncheck'd, uncontradicted—
 O 'tis a meanness equal even to falsehood!

Sigisf. Laura, no more—We have already judg'd
 Too largely without knowledge. Oft, what seems
 A trifle, a mere nothing, by itself,
 In some nice situations, turns the scale
 Of fate, and rules the most important actions.
 Yes, I begin to feel a sad presage:
 I am undone from that eternal source
 Of human woes—the judgment of the passions.
 But what have I to do with these excuses?
 O cease, my treacherous heart, to give them room!

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It suits not thee to plead a lover's cause;
Even to lament my fate is now dishonour.
Now nought remains, but with relentless purpose
To shun all interviews, all clearing up
Of this dark scene; to wrap myself in gloom,
In solitude and shades; there to devour
The silent sorrows ever swelling here;
And since I must be wretched—for I must—
To claim the mighty misery myself,
Engross it all, and spare a hapless father.
Hence let me fly!—the hour approaches—

Laur. Madam,

Behold he comes—the King—

Sigis. Heavens! how escape?

No—I will stay—This one last meeting—Leave me.

S C E N E II.

TANCRED, SIGISMUNDA.

Tanc. And are these long long hours of torture past?
My life! my Sigismunda! [*Throwing himself at her feet.*

Sigis. Rise, my Lord.

To see my sovereign thus no more becomes me.

Tanc. O let me kiss the ground on which you tread?
Let me exhale my soul in softest transport!

Since I again embrace my Sigismunda! [*Rising.*

Unkind! how couldst thou ever deem me false?

How thus dishonour love?—O I could much

Embitter my complaint!—How low were then

Thy thoughts of me? How didst thou then affront

The human heart itself? After the vows,

The fervent truth, the tender protestations,

Which mine has often pour'd, to let thy breast,

Whate'er th' appearance was, admit suspicion?

Sigis. How! when I heard myself your full consent
To the late king's so just and prudent will?

Heard it before you read, in solemn senate?

When I beheld you give your royal hand,

To her, whose birth and dignity, of right,
 Demands that high alliance? Yes, my Lord,
 You have done well. The man, whom Heaven appoints
 To govern others, should himself first learn
 To bend his passions to the sway of reason.
 In all you have done well; but when you bid
 My humbled hopes look up to you again,
 And sooth'd with wanton cruelty my weakness—
 That too was well—My vanity deserv'd
 The sharp rebuke, whose fond extravagance
 Could ever dream to balance your repose,
 Your glory and the welfare of a people.

Tanc. Chide on, chide on: Thy soft reproaches now,
 Instead of wounding, only soothe my fondness.
 No, no, thou charming consort of my soul!
 I never lov'd thee with such faithful ardour,
 As in that cruel miserable moment
 You thought me false; when even my honour stoop'd
 To wear for thee a baffled face of baseness.
 It was thy barbarous father, Sigismunda,
 Who caught me in the toil. He turn'd that paper,
 Meant for th' assuring bond of nuptial love,
 To ruin it for ever; he, he wrote
 That forg'd consent, you heard, beneath my name;
 Nay, dar'd before my outraged throne to read it!
 Had he not been thy father—Ha! my love!
 You tremble, you grow pale.

Sigis. O leave me, Tancred!

Tanc. No!—Leave thee?—Never! never! till you set
 My heart at peace, till these dear lips again
 Pronounce thee mine! Without thee I renounce
 Myself, my friends, the world—Here on this hand—

Sigis. My Lord, forget that hand, which never now
 Can be to thine united—

Tanc. Sigismunda!

What dost thou mean? Thy words, thy look, thy
 manner

Seem to conceal some horrid secret—heavens!—

No—That was wild—Distraction fires the thought!—

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Act IV. SIGISMUNDA. 59

Sigif. Enquire no more—I never can be thine.

Tanc. What, who shall interpose? who dares attempt
To brave the fury of an injur'd king?
Who, ere he sees thee ravish'd from his hopes,
Will wrap all blazing Sicily in flames—

Sigif. In vain your power, my Lord—This fatal error,
Join'd to my father's unrelenting will,
Has plac'd an everlasting bar betwixt us—
I am—Earl Osmond's—wife!—

Tanc. Earl Osmond's wife!

*[After a long pause, during which they look
at one another with the highest agitation
and most tender distress.]*

Heavens! did I hear thee right? what! marry'd?
marry'd?

Lost to thy faithful Tancred! lost for ever!

Couldst thou then doom me to such matchless woe,

Without so much as hearing me?—Distraction!—

Alas! what hast thou done? Ah, Sigismunda!

Thy rash credulity has done a deed,

Which of two happiest lovers—that ere felt

The blissful power, has made two finish'd wretches!

But—madness!—Sure, thou know'st it cannot be!

This hand is mine! a thousand thousand vows—

S C E N E III.

TANCRED, OSMOND, SIGISMUNDA.

Osmon. snatching her hand from the king.] Madam, this
hand, by the most solemn rites,

A little hour ago, was given to me:

And did not sovereign honour now command me,

Never but with my life to quit my claim,

I would renounce it—thus!

Tanc. Ha! who art thou!

Presumptuous man?

Sigif. aside.] Where is my father? heavens! *[Goes out.]*

Osmon. One thou shouldst better know—Yes—view me
—one!

Who can and will maintain his rights and honour,
Against a faithless prince, an upstart king,
Whose first base deed is what a harden'd tyrant
Would blush to act.

Tanc. Insolent Osmond! know,
This upstart king will hurl confusion on thee,
And all who shall invade his sacred rights,
Prior to thine—Thine founded on compulsion,
On infamous deceit; while his proceed
From mutual love and free long-plighted faith.
She is, and shall be mine!—I will annul,
By the high power with which the laws invest me,
Those guilty forms in which you have entrap'd,
Basely entrap'd, to thy detested nuptials,
My queen betroth'd; who has my heart, my hand,
And shall partake my throne—If, haughty lord,
If this thou didst not know, then know it now!
And know besides, as I have told thee this,
Shouldst thou but think to urge thy treason further—
Than treason more! treason against my love!—
Thy life shall answer for it!

Osmond. Ha! my life!—
It moves my scorn to hear thy empty threats.
When was it that a Norman baron's life
Became so vile, as on the frown of kings
To hang?—Of that, my Lord, the law must judge;
Or if the law be weak, my guardian sword—

Tanc. Dare not to touch it, traitor! lest my rage
Break loose, and do a deed that misbecomes me.

S C E N E IV.

TANCRED, SIFFREDI, OSMOND.

Siff. entering.] My gracious Lord! what is it I behold?
My sovereign in contention with his subjects?
Surely this house deserves from royal Tancred
A little more regard than to be made
A scene of trouble and unseemly jars.

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It grieves my soul, it baffles every hope,
It makes me sick of life, to see thy glory
Thus blasted in the bud—Heavens! can your Highness
From your exalted character descend,
The dignity of virtue; and, instead
Of being the protector of our rights,
The holy guardian of domestic bliss,
Unkindly thus disturb the sweet repose,
The sacred peace of families, for which
Alone the free-born race of men to laws
And government submitted?

Tanc. My Lord Siffredi,
Spare thy rebuke. The duties of my station
Are not to me unknown—But thou, old man,
Dost thou not blush to talk of rights invaded?
And of our best, our dearest bliss disturb'd?
Thou! who with more than barbarous perfidy
Hast trampled all allegiance, justice, truth,
Humanity itself, beneath thy feet?
Thou know'st thou hast—I could, to thy confusion,
Return thy hard reproaches; but I spare thee
Before this lord, for whose ill-forted friendship
Thou hast most basely sacrific'd thy daughter.
Farewell, my Lord!—For thee, Lord Constable,
Who dost presume to lift thy surely eye
To my soft love, my gentle Sigismunda,
I once again command thee, on thy life—
Yes—chew thy rage—but mark me—on thy life,
No further urge thy arrogant pretensions!

S C E N E V.

SIFFREDI, OSMOND.

Ha! arrogant pretensions! heaven and earth!
What! arrogant pretensions to my wife?
My wedded wife! Where are we? in a land
Of civil rule, of liberty and laws?—
Not on my life pursue them?—Giddy prince!

My life disdains thy nod. It is the gift
 Of parent Heaven, who gave me too an arm,
 A spirit to defend it against tyrants.
 The Norman race, the sons of mighty Rollo,
 Who rushing in a tempest from the north,
 Great nurse of generous freemen bravely won
 With their own swords their seats, and still possess them
 By the same noble tenure, are not us'd
 To hear such language.—If I now desist
 Then brand me for a coward, deem me villain!
 A traitor to the public! by this conduct
 Deceiv'd, betray'd, insulted, tyranniz'd,
 Mine is a common cause. My arm shall guard,
 Mix'd with my own, the rights of each Sicilian,
 Of social life, and of mankind in general
 Ere to thy tyrant rage they fall a prey,
 I shall find means to shake thy tottering throne,
 Which this illegal, this perfidious usage
 Forfeits at once, and crush thee in the ruins!—
 Constantia is my queen!

Siff. Lord Constable,

Let us be steadfast in the right; but let us
 Act with cool prudence, and with manly temper,
 As well as manly firmness. True, I own,
 Th' indignities you suffer are so high,
 As might even justify what you now threaten.
 But if, my Lord, we can prevent the woes,
 The cruel horrors of intestine war,
 Yet hold untouch'd our liberties and laws;
 O let us, rais'd above the turbid sphere
 Of little selfish passions, nobly do it!
 Nor to our hot intemperate pride pour out
 A dire libation of Sicilian blood.
 'Tis godlike magnanimity, to keep,
 When most provok'd, our reason calm and clear,
 And execute her will, from a strong sense
 Of what is right, without the vulgar aid
 Of heat and passion, which, tho' honest, bear us
 Often too far. Remember that my house

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Protects my daughter still; and ere I saw her
Thus ravish'd from us by the arm of power,
This hand should avenge the Roman father's part.
Fear not; be temperate; all will yet be well.

I know the King. At first his passions burst
Quick as the lightning's flash: but in his breast
Honour and justice dwell.—Trust me, to reason
He will return.

Osmond. He will!—By Heavens, he shall!
You know the King!—I wish, my Lord Siffredi,
That you had deign'd to tell me all you knew.

And would you have me wait, with dutious patience,
Till he return to reason? Ye just Powers!
When he has planted on our necks his foot,
And trod us into slaves; when his vain pride
Is cloy'd with our submission; if, at last,
He finds his arm too weak to shake the frame
Of wide-establish'd order out of joint,
And overturn all justice; then, perchance,
He, in a fit of sickly kind repentance,
May make a merit to return to reason.

No, no, my Lord!—There is a nobler way,
To teach the blind oppressive *Fury* reason:
Oft has the lustre of avenging steel
Unseal'd her stupid eyes.—The sword is reason!

S C E N E VI.

Siffredi, Osmond, Rodolpho, with Guards.

Rod. My Lord High Constable of Sicily,
In the King's name, and by his special order,
I here arrest you prisoner of state.

Osmond. What king? I know no king of Sicily—
Unless he be the husband of Constantia.

Rod. Then know him now—Behold his royal orders
To bear you to the castle of Palermo.

Siff. Let the big torrent foam its madness off.
Submit, my Lord.—No castle long can hold
Our wrongs.—This, more than friendship or alliance,

Confirms me thine ; this binds me to thy fortunes,
By the strong ty of common injury,
Which nothing can dissolve.——I grieve, Rodolpho,
To see the reign in such unhappy fort
Begin.

Ofm. The reign ! the usurpation call it !
This meteor-king may blaze a while, but soon
Must spend his idle terrors.——Sir, lead on——
Farewell, my Lord.——More than my life and fortune,
Remember well, is in your hands——my honour !

Siff. Our honour is the same. My son, farewell——
We shall not long be parted.——On these eyes
Sleep shall not shed his balm, till I behold thee
Restor'd to freedom, or partake thy bonds.

Even noble courage is not void of blame,
Till nobler patience sanctifies its flame.

ACT V. SCENE I.

SIFFREDI alone.

THE prospect low'rs around. I found the King,
Tho' calm'd a little, with subsiding tempest,
As suits his generous nature, yet in love
Abated nought, most ardent in his purpose ;
Inexorably fix'd, whate'er the risque,
To claim my daughter, and dissolve this marriage.——
I have embark'd, upon a perilous sea,
A mighty treasure. Here the rapid youth,
Th' impetuous passions of a lover-king
Check my bold course ; and there the jealous pride,
Th' impatient honour of a haughty lord
Of the first rank, in interest and dependants
Near equal to the King, forbid retreat.
My honour too, the same unchang'd conviction,
That these my measures were, and still remain
Of absolute necessity, to save
The land from civil fury, urge me on.

ACT V.

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But how proceed? I only faster rush
 Upon the desperate evils I would shun.
 Whate'er the motive be, deceit, I fear,
 And harsh unnatural force are not the means
 Of public welfare, or of private bliss.——
 Bear witness, Heaven! thou mind-inspecting Eye!
 My breast is pure. I have prefer'd my duty,
 The good and safety of my fellow-subjects,
 To all those views that fire the selfish race
 Of men, and mix them in eternal broils.

Enter an OFFICER belonging to SIFFREDI.

Off. My Lord, a man of noble port, his face
 Wrap'd in disguise, is earnest for admission.

Siff. Go, bid him enter. *[Officer goes out.]*
 Ha! wrap'd in disguise!
 And at this late unseasonable hour!
 When o'er the world tremendous midnight reigns,
 By the dire gloom of raging tempest doubled.——

S C E N E II.

SIFFREDI, OSMOND, discovering himself.

Siff. What! ha! Earl Osmond, you!——Welcome,
 once more,
 To this glad roof!——But why in this disguise?
 Would I could hope the King exceeds his promise!
 I have his faith, soon as to-morrow's sun
 Shall gild Sicilia's cliffs, you shall be free.——
 Has some good angel turn'd his heart to justice?

Osm. It is not by the favour of Count Tancred
 That I am here. As much I scorn his favour,
 As I defy his tyranny and threats.——
 Our friend Goffredi, who commands the castle,
 On my parole, ere dawn to render back
 My person, has permitted me this freedom.
 Know then; the faithless outrage of to-day,
 By him committed whom you call the King,

Confirms me thine ; this binds me to thy fortunes,
By the strong ty of common injury, — I grieve, Rodolpho,
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ACT V. S I G I S M U N D A

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SIFFREDI, OSMOND, *discovering himself.*

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To this glad roof! — But why in this disguise?
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I have his faith, soon as to-morrow's sun
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That I am here. As much I scorn his favour,
As I defy his tyranny and threats. —
Our friend Goffredi, who commands the castle,
On my parole, ere dawn to render back
My person, has permitted me this freedom.
Know then; the faithless outrage of to-day,
By him committed whom you call the King,

Has rous'd Constantia's court. Our friends, the friends
 Of virtue, justice, and of public faith,
 Ripe for revolt, are in high ferment all.
 This, this, they say, exceeds whate'er deform'd
 The miserable days we saw beneath
William the bad. This saps the solid base,
 At once of government and private life;
 This shameless imposition on the faith,
 The majesty of senates, this leud insult,
 This violation of the rights of men.
 Added to these, his ignominious treatment
 Of her th' illustrious offspring of our kings,
 Sicilia's hope, and now our royal mistress.
 You know, my Lord, how grossly these infringe
 The late king's will; which orders, if Count Tancred
 Make not Constantia partner of his throne,
 That he be quite excluded the succession,
 And she to Henry given, King of the Romans,
 The potent Emperor Barbarossa's son,
 Who seeks with earnest instance her alliance.
 I thence of you, as guardian of the laws,
 As guardian of this Will to you intrusted,
 Desire, nay more, demand, your instant aid,
 To see it put in vigorous execution.

Siff. You cannot doubt, my Lord, of my concurrence.
 Who more than I have labour'd this great point?
 'Tis my own plan: and, if I drop it now,
 I should be justly branded with the shame
 Of rash advice, or despicable weakness.
 But let us not precipitate the matter.
 Constantia's friends are numerous and strong;
 Yet Tancred's, trust me, are of equal force.
 E'er since the secret of his birth was known,
 The people all are in a tumult hurl'd
 Of boundless joy, to hear there lives a prince
 Of mighty Guiscard's line. Numbers, besides,
 Of powerful barons, who at heart had pined,
 To see the reign of their renown'd forefathers,
 Won by immortal deeds of matchless valour,

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Pass from the gallant Normans to the Suevi,
Will, with a kind of rage, espouse his cause——
'Tis so, my Lord—be not by passion blinded——
'Tis surely so.——O, if our prating virtue
Dwells not in words alone——O, let us join,
My generous Osmond, to avert these woes,
And yet sustain our tottering Norman kingdom!

Os. But how, Siffredi? how?——If by soft means
We can maintain our rights, and save our country,
May his unnatural blood first stain the sword,
Who with unpietied fury first shall draw it!

Siff. I have a thought—The glorious work be thine,
But it requires an awful flight of virtue,
Above the passions of the vulgar breast;
And thence from thee I hope it, noble Osmond——
Suppose my daughter, to her God devoted,
Were plac'd within some convent's sacred verge,
Beneath the dread protection of the altar——

Os. Ere then, by Heavens! I would devoutly shave
My holy scalp, turn whining monk myself,
And pray incessant for the tyrant's safety!
What! how! because an insolent invader,
A sacrilegious tyrant, in contempt
Of all those noblest rights, which to maintain
Is man's peculiar pride, demands my wife;
That I shall thus betray the common cause
Of human kind, and tamely yield her up,
Even in the manner you propose.——O then
I were supremely vile! degraded! shamed!
The scorn of manhood! and abhor'd of honour!

Siff. There is, my Lord, an honour, the calm child
Of reason, of humanity, and mercy,
Superior far to this punctilious dæmon,
That singly minds itself, and oft embroils
With proud barbarian niceties the world!

Os. My Lord, my Lord!——I cannot brook your
prudence——
It holds a pulse unequal to my blood——
Unblemish'd honour is the flower of virtue!

The vivifying soul! and he who slights it
Will leave the other dull and lifeless dross.

Siff. No more.—You are too warm.

Osm. You are too cool.

Siff. Too cool, my Lord? I were indeed too cool,

Not to resent this language, and to tell thee—

I wish Earl Osmond were as cool as I

To his own selfish bliss—ay, and as warm

To that of others—but of this no more—

My daughter is thy wife—I gave her to thee,

And will against all force maintain her thine.

But think not I will catch thy headlong passions,

Whirl'd in a blaze of madness o'er the land;

Or, till the last extremity compel me,

Risque the dire means of war—The King to-morrow

Will set you free; and, if by gentle means

He does not yield my daughter to your arms,

And wed Constantia, as the will requires,

Why then expect me on the side of justice—

Let that suffice.

Osm. It does—forgive my heat.

My rankled mind, by injuries inflamed,

May be too prompt to take and give offence.

Siff. 'Tis past—your wrongs, I own, may well trans-

port

The wisest mind—but henceforth, noble Osmond,

Do me more justice, honour more my truth,

Nor mark me with an eye of squint suspicion—

These jars apart—you may repose your soul

On my firm faith and unremitting friendship.

Of that I sure have given exalted proof,

And the next sun we see shall prove it farther—

Return, my son, and from your friend Goffredo

Release your word. There try, by soft repose,

To calm your breast.

Osm. Bid the vext ocean sleep,

Swept by the pinions of the raging north—

But your frail age, by care and toil exhausted,

Demands the balm of all-repairing rest.

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Siff. Soon as to-morrow's dawn shall streak the skies,
I, with my friends in solemn state assembled,
Will to the palace, and demand your freedom.
Then by calm reason, or by higher means,
The king shall quit his claim, and in the face
Of Sicily, my daughter shall be yours.
Farewell.

Osm. My Lord, good night.

S C E N E III.

OSMOND alone. [*After a long pause.*]

I like him not——

Yes—I have mighty matter of suspicion.
'Tis plain—I see it lurking in his breast,
He has a foolish fondness for this king——
My honour is not safe, while here my wife
Remains——Who knows but he this very night
May bear her to some convent, as he mention'd——
The king too—tho' I smother'd up my rage,
I mark'd it well——will set me free to-morrow.
Why not to-night? He has some dark design——
By heavens! he has——I am abus'd most grossly;
Made the vile tool of this old statesman's schemes;
Marry'd to one—ay, and he knew it—one
Who loves young Tancred! Hence her swooning, tears,
And all her soft distress, when she disgrac'd me
By basely giving her perfidious hand
Without her heart——Hell and perdition! this,
This is the perfidy!——This is the fell,
The keen, envenom'd exquisite disgrace!
Which to a man of honour even exceeds
The falsehood of the person——But I now
Will rouse me from the poor tame lethargy,
By my believing fondness cast upon me.
I will not wait his crawling timid motions,
Perhaps to blind me meant, which he to-morrow
Has promis'd to pursue. No! ere his eyes
Shall open on to-morrow's orient beam,
I will convince him that Earl Osmond never

Was form'd to be his dupe—I know full well
 Th' important weight and danger of the deed
 But to a man whom greater dangers press,
 Driven to the brink of infamy and horror,
 Rashness itself, and utter desperation,
 Are the best prudence—I will bear her off
 This night, and lodge her in a place of safety.
 I have a trusty band that waits not far—
 Hence! let me lose no time—One rapid moment
 Should ardent form, at once, and execute
 A bold design—'Tis fix'd—'Tis done!—Yes, then,
 When I have seiz'd the prize of love and honour,
 And with a friend secur'd her; to the castle
 I will repair, and claim Goffredo's promise
 To rise with all his garrison—my friends
 With brave impatience wait. The mine is laid,
 And only wants my kindling touch to spring.

S C E N E IV.

SIGISMUNDA'S Apartment.

SIGISMUNDA, LAURA.

Lau. Heavens! 'tis a fearful night!

Sigif. Ah! the black rage
 Of midnight tempest, or th' assuring smiles
 Of radiant morn, are equal all to me.
 Nought now has charms or terrors to my breast,
 The fear of stupid woe! Leave me, my Laura!
 Kind rest, perhaps, may hush my woes a little—
 Oh for that quiet sleep that knows no morning!

Lau. Madam, indeed I know not how to go:
 Indulge my fondness—Let me watch a while
 By your sad bed, till these dread hours shall pass.

Sigif. Alas! what is the toil of elements,
 This idle perturbation of the sky,
 To what I feel within!—Oh that the fires
 Of pitying Heaven would point their fury here!
 Good night, my dearest Laura!

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ACT V. SIGISMUNDA. 71

Lau. Oh I know not
What this oppression means—but 'tis with pain,
With tears, I can persuade myself to leave you—
Well then—Good night, my dearest Sigismunda!

SCENE V.

SIGISMUNDA.

And am I then alone?—The most undone,
Most wretched being now beneath the cope
Of this affrighting gloom that wraps the world!—
I said I did not fear—Ah me! I feel
A shivering horror, run through all my powers!
O I am nought but tumult, fears and weakness!
And yet how idle fear, when hope is gone,
Gone, gone for ever!—O thou gentle scene

[Looking towards her bed.]
Of sweet repose, where by th' oblivious draught
Of each sad tedious day, to peace restor'd
Unhappy mortals lose their woes a while,
Thou hast no peace for me!—What shall I do?
How pass this dreadful night, so big with terror?
Here, with the midnight shades, here will I sit,
[Sitting down.]

A prey to dire despair, and ceaseless weep!
The hours away—Bless me!—I heard a noise—
[Starting up.]

No—I mistook—Nothing but silence reigns
And awful midnight round—Again!—O heavens!
My Lord the King!

SCENE VI.

TANCRED, SIGISMUNDA.

Tanc. Be not alarm'd, my love.

Sigif. My Royal Lord! why at this midnight hour,
How came you hither?

Tanc. By that secret way
My love contriv'd, when we, in happier days

Us'd to devote these hours, so much in vain,
To vows of love and everlasting friendship.

Sigif. Why will you thus persist to add new stings
To her distress, who never can be thine? —
O fly me! fly! You know —

Tanc. I know too much.

O how I could reproach thee, Sigismunda!
Pour out my injur'd soul in just complaints!
But now the time permits not, these swift moments —
I told thee how thy father's artifice
Forc'd me to seem perfidious in thine eyes.
Ah, fatal blindness! not to have observ'd
The mingled pangs of rage and love that shook me;
When, by my cruel public situation
Compell'd, I only feign'd consent, to gain
A little time, and more secure thee mine.
E'er since — A dreadful interval of care! —

My thoughts have been employ'd, not without hope,
How to defeat Siffredi's barbarous purpose.
But thy credulity has ruin'd all,
Thy rash, thy wild — I know not what to name it —
Oh it has prov'd the giddy hopes of man
To be delusion all, and sickening folly!

Sigif. Ah, generous Tancred! ah thy truth destroys
me!

Yes, yes, 'tis I, 'tis I alone am false!
My hasty rage, join'd to my tame submission,
More than the most exalted filial duty
Could e'er demand, has dash'd our cup of fate
With bitterness unequal'd — But, alas!
What are thy woes to mine? — to mine! just heaven!

Now is thy turn of vengeance — hate, renounce me!
O leave me to the fate I well deserve,
To sink in hopeless misery! — at least,
Try to forget the worthless Sigismunda!

Tanc. Forget thee! no! Thou art my soul itself!
I have no thought, no hope, no wish, but thee!
Even this repented injury, the fears,

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Retire,

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That rouse me all to madness, at the thought
Of losing thee, the whole collected pains
Of my full heart, serve but to make thee dearer!
Ah, how forget thee!—Much must be forgot,
Ere Tancred can forget his Sigismunda!

Sigif. But you, my Lord, must make that great effort.

Tanc. Can Sigismunda make it?

Sigif. Ah! I know not
With what success—But all that feeble woman,
And love-entangled reason can perform,
I, to the utmost, will exert to do it.

Tanc. Fear not—'Tis done!—If thou canst form
the thought,
Success is sure—I am forgot already!

Sigif. Ah, Tancred!—But, my Lord, respect me more.
Think who I am—What can you now propose?

Tanc. To claim the plighted vows which Heaven has
heard,
To vindicate the rights of holy love,
By faith and honour bound, to which compar'd
These empty forms which have ensnar'd thy hand,
Are impious guile, abuse, and profanation—
Nay, as a king, whose high prerogative
By this unlicens'd marriage is affronted,
To bid the laws themselves pronounce it void.

Sigif. Honour, my Lord, is much too proud to catch
At every slender twig of nice distinctions.
These for th' unfeeling vulgar may do well:
But those, whose souls are by the nicer rule
Of virtuous delicacy nobly sway'd,
Stand at another bar than that of laws.
Then cease to urge me—Since I am not born
To that exalted fate to be your queen—
Or, yet a dearer name—to be your wife!—
I am the wife of an illustrious lord
Of your own princely blood; and what I am,
I will with proper dignity remain.
Retire, my royal Lord—There is no means

To cure the wounds this fatal day has given.
We meet no more!

Tanc. Oh barbarous Sigismunda!
And canst thou talk thus steadily? thus treat me
With such unpying, unrelenting rigour?
Poor is the love, that rather than give up
A little pride, a little formal pride,
The breath of vanity, can bear to see
The many whose heart was once so dear to thine,
By many a tender vow so mix'd together,
A prey to anguish, fury and distraction!—
Thou canst not surely make me such a wretch,
Thou canst not, Sigismunda! Yet relent,
O save us yet!—Rodolpho, with my guards,
Waits in the garden—Let us seize the moments
We ne'er may have again—With more than power
I will assert thee mine, with fairest honour.
The world shall even approve; each honest bosom
Swell with a kindred joy to see us happy.

Sigif. The world approve!—What is the world to me?
The conscious mind is its own awful world,
And yet perhaps, if thou wert not a king,
I know not, Tancred, what I might have done.
Then, then my conduct, sanctified by love,
Could not be deem'd, by the severest judge,
The mean effect of interest or ambition.
But now, not all my partial heart can plead,
Shall ever shake th' invulnerable dictates
That tyrannize my breast.

Tanc. 'Tis well—No more—
I yield me to my fate—Yes, yes, inhuman!
Since thy barbarian heart is steel'd by pride,
Shut up to love and pity, here behold me
Cast on the ground, a vile and abject wretch!
Lost to all cares, all dignities, all duties!
Here will I grow, breathe out my faithful soul,
Here at thy feet—Death, death alone shall part us!

Sigif. Have you then vow'd to drive me to perdition?
What can I more?—Yes, Tancred! once again

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Exult—

I will forget the dignity my station
 Commands me to sustain—for the last time
 Will tell thee, that, I fear, no ties, no duty,
 Can ever root thee from my hapless bosom.
 O leave me! fly me! were it but in pity!—
 To see what once we tenderly have lov'd,
 Cut off from every hope—cut off for ever!
 Is pain thy generosity should spare me.
 Then rise, my Lord; and if you truly love me;
 If you respect my honour, nay, my peace,
 Retire! for though th' emotions of my heart
 Can ne'er alarm my virtue; yet, alas!
 They tear it so, they pierce it with such anguish—
 Oh 'tis too much!—I cannot bear the conflict!

SCENE VII.

TANCRED. OSMOND, SIGISMUNDA.

Os. [entering.] Turn, tyrant! turn! and answer
 to my honour,

For this thy base unsufferable outrage!

Tanc. Insolent traitor! think not to escape
 Thyself my vengeance! [They fight. Osmond falls.]

Sigif. Help, here! Help!—O heavens!
 [Throwing herself down by him.]

Alas! my Lord, what meant your headlong rage?

That faith, which I, this day, upon the altar

To you devoted, is unblemish'd, pure,

As vestal truth; was resolutely yours,

Beyond the power of aught on earth to shake it.

Os. Perfidious woman! die!—

[Shortening his sword he plunges it into her breast.
 And to the grave

Attend a husband, yet but half aveng'd!

Tanc. O horror! horror! execrable villain!

Os. And, tyrant! thou!—Thou shalt not o'er my
 tomb—

Exult—'Tis well—'Tis great!—I die content.—[Dies.]

S C E N E VIII.

TANCRED, SIFFREDI, RODOLPHO, SIGISMUNDA,
LAURA.

Tanc. throwing himself down by Sigismunda. Quick!
here! bring aid!—All in Palermo bring the
Whose skill can save her!—Ah! that gentle bosom
Pours fast the streams of life.

Sigif. All aid is vain,
I feel the powerful hand of death upon me——
But, oh! it sheds a sweetness thro' my fate,
That I am thine again; and, without blame,
May in my Tancred's arms resign my soul!

Tanc. Oh, death is in that voice! so gently mild,
So sadly sweet, as mixes even with mine
The tears of hovering angels!—Mine again!—
And is it thus the cruel fates have join'd us?
Are these the horrid nuptials they prepare
For love like ours? Is virtue thus rewarded?
Let not my impious rage accuse just Heaven!
Thou, Tancred! thou! hast murder'd Sigismunda!
That furious man was but the tool of fate,
I, I the cause!—But I will do thee justice
On this deaf heart! that to thy tender wisdom
Refus'd an ear—Yes, death shall soon unite us!

Sigif. Live, live, my Tancred!—Let my death suffice
To expiate all that may have been amiss,
May it appease the fates, avert their fury
From thy propitious reign! Mean-time, of me
And of thy glory mindful, live, I charge thee,
To guard our friends, and make thy people happy—

[Observing Siffredi fixt in astonishment and grief.]
My father!—Oh! how shall I lift my eyes
To thee, my sinking father!

Siff. Awful Heaven!
I am chastis'd!—My dearest child!—

Sigif. Where am I?

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A fearful darkness closes all around—
My friends! we needs must part—I must obey
Th' imperious call—Farewell, my Laura! cherish
My poor afflicted father's age—Rodolpho,
Now is the time to watch th' unhappy king,
With all the care and tenderness of friendship—
Oh my dear father! bow'd beneath the weight
Of age and grief—the victim even of virtue,
Receive my last adieu!—Where art thou, Tancred?
Give me thy hand—But ah! it cannot save me
From the dire king of terrors, whose cold power
Creeps o'er my heart—Oh!

Tanc. How these pangs distract me;
O lift thy gracious eyes!—Thou leav'st me then?
Thou leav'st me, Sigismunda!

Sigif. Yet a moment—
I had, my Tancred, something more to say—
Yes—but thy love and tenderness for me
Sure makes it needless—Harbour no resentment
Against my father; venerate his zeal,
That acted from a principle of goodness,
From faithful love to thee—live and maintain
My innocence imbalm'd, with holiest care—
Preserve my spotless memory!—I die—
ETERNAL MERCY take my trembling soul!
Oh! 'tis the only sting of death to part
From those we love—From these—farewell, my Tancred!

Tanc. Thus then!

[Flying to his sword is held by Rodolpho.

Rod. Hold! hold! my Lord!—Have you forgot
Your Sigismunda's last request already?

Tanc. Oh! set me free! Think not to bind me down,
With barbarous friendship, to the rack of life!
What hand can shut the thousand thousand gates,
Which Death still opens to the woes of mortals?—
I shall find means—No power in earth or heaven
Can force me to endure the hateful light,
Thus robb'd of all that lent it joy and sweetness!

Off! traitors! off!—or my distracted soul
 Will burst indignant from this jail of nature,
 To where she beckons yonder—No, mild seraph,
 Point not to life—I cannot linger here,
 Cut off from thee, the miserable pity,
 The scorn of human kind!—A trampled king,
 Who let his mean poor-hearted love, one moment,
 To coward prudence stoop; who made it not
 The first undoubting action of his reign,
 To snatch thee to his throne, and there to shield thee,
 Thy helpless bosom from a ruffian's fury!—
 O shame! O agony! O the fell stings
 Of late, of vain repentance!—Ha! my brain
 Is all on fire! a wild abyss of thought!—
 Th' infernal world discloses! See! behold him!
 Lo! with fierce smiles he shakes the bloody steel,
 And moeks my feeble tears!—Hence! quickly! hence!
 Spurn his vile carcase! give it to the dogs!
 Expose it to the winds and screaming ravens!
 Or hurl it down that fiery steep to hell,
 There with his soul to toss in flames for ever!
 Ah, impotence of rage!—What am I?—Where?
 Sad, silent, all?—The forms of dumb despair,
 Around some mournful tomb!—What do I see?
 This soft abode of innocence and love
 Turn'd to the house of death! a place of horror!
 Ah, that poor corpse! pale! pale! deform'd with murder!
 Is that my Sigismunda!

[Throwing himself down by her.]

SIFFREDI.

[After a pathetic pause, looking on the scene before him.]

Have I liv'd
 To these enfeebled years, by Heaven reserv'd
 To be a dreadful monument of justice?
 Rodolpho, raise the King, and bear him hence
 From this distracting scene of blood and death.
 Alas! I dare not give him my assistance;
 My care would only more enflame his rage.

Behold the fatal work of my dark hand,
 That by rude force the passions would command,
 That ruthless sought to root them from the breast;
 They may be rul'd, but will not be oppress'd.
 Taught hence, ye parents, who from nature stray,
 And the great ties of social life betray;
 Ne'er with your children act a tyrant's part:
 'Tis yours to guide, not violate the heart.
 Ye vainly wise, who o'er mankind preside,
 Behold my righteous woes, and drop your pride!
 Keep Virtue's simple path before your eyes,
 Nor think from evil good can ever rise *.

* This is one of the best of Mr Thomson's dramatic pieces, and met with very good success. The characters are well supported, though not sufficiently new and striking: the loves of Tancred and Sigismunda are tender, pathetic, and affecting; but there is too little variety of incident to preserve the attention of an audience. The language, in general, is poetical and flowery, though in some places too declamatory and sentimental. Upon the whole, this play, though possessed of a considerable share of merit, seems better adapted to the closet than the theatre.

Not think from any good can ever rise
Krop Vinn's - his path before you lies
Hollow thy righteous ways, and drop your guide!
Ye vainly wish, who oft are making pride,
To have a guide, not violate the hand,
To give with you, oblation as a martyr's part;
And the great sin of social life depart;
Taint hence, ye sinners, who from nature stray,
There may be still, but will not be afraid;
That truth is taught to you from the breast;
That ye shall have the passion never command,
Behold the face of my dark hand.

It is of one of the best of the Thomas, dramatic pro-
we and met with very good success. The first of the
well appeared, though not sufficiently new and striking;
the faces of Thomas and Stephens are rather pathetic,
and striking; but there is too much variety of interest to
prevent the attention of an audience. The language is
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EPILOGUE

Spoken, by Miss BUDGE L.

GRAMM'D to the throat with wholesome moral stuff,
Alas! poor audience! you have had enough.
Was ever hapless heroine of a play
In such a piteous plight as ours to-day?
Was ever woman so by love betray'd?
Match'd with two husbands, and yet—die a maid.
But, bless me!—hold—What sounds are these I hear!
I see the Tragic Muse herself appear.

[The back-scene opens, and discovers a romantic Sylvan landscape; from which Mrs CIBBER, in the character of the Tragic Muse, advances slowly to music, and speaks the following lines.]

HENCE with your suppliant Epilogue, that tries
To wipe the virtuous tear from British eyes;
That dares my moral, tragic scene profane,
With strains—at best, unsuited, light and vain.
Hence from the pure unsully'd beams that play
In yon fair eyes where virtue shines—Away!

Britons, to you from chaste Castalian groves,
Where dwell the tender, oft unhappy loves;
Where shades of heroes roam, each mighty name,
And court my aid to rise again to fame;
To you I come, to freedom's noblest seat,
And in Britannia fix my last retreat.

In Greece and Rome, I watch'd the public weal;
The purple tyrant trembled at my steel:

Nor did I less o'er private sorrows reign,
 And mend the melting heart with softer pain.
 On France and You then rose my bright'ning star,
 With social ray—The Arts are ne'er at war,
 O as your fire and genius stronger blaze,
 As yours are generous Freedom's bolder lays,
 Let not the Gallie taste leave yours behind,
 In decent manners and in life refin'd;
 Banish the motely mads, to tog-law verse,
 The laughing ballad to the mournful verse.
 When thro' five acts your hearts have learn'd to glow,
 Touch'd with the sacred force of honest woe;
 O keep the dear impression on your breast,
 Nor idly lose it for a wretched jest.

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PROVOK'D HUSBAND;

JOURNEY TO LONDON.

ADVERTISEMENT.

THIS play is considerably shortened in the performance; but I hope it will not be disagreeable to the reader to see it as it was at first written; there being a great difference betwixt a play in the closet, and upon the stage.

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THE
PROVOK'D HUSBAND;

OR, A
JOURNEY to LONDON.

A
COMEDY.

BY
Sir JOHN VANBRUGH, and Mr CIBBER.

To which is prefixed,
The LIFE of Sir JOHN VANBRUGH,

EDINBURGH:
Printed by and for MARTIN & WOTHERSPOON;

M. DCC. LXXIII.

PROVOK'D HUSBAND;

OR A

JOURNEY TO LONDON.

A

COMEDY.

BY

SIR JOHN VANBRUGH, AND MR. CRESS.

To which is prefixed,

THE LIFE OF SIR JOHN VANBRUGH.

EDINBURGH:

Printed by and for HARRIS & WOTTELL.

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The first of our Author made into life, was in the

of a very early age, and an excellent education

and a particular obligation to him. He had for

early discovered a taste for dramatic writing, to im-

prove which he made some attempts in that way, and

in the course of it, he thought to procure some ad-

Sir JOHN VANBRUGH.

THIS gentleman was descended from an ancient family in Cheshire, which came originally from France; though by the name it would appear to be of Dutch extraction. He received a very liberal education, and became eminent for his poetry, and skill in architecture, to both which he discovered an early propension. It is somewhat remarkable in the history of Poetry, that when the spirit of Tragedy, in a great measure, declined, when Otway and Lee were dead, and Dryden was approaching to old age, that Comedy should then begin to flourish; at an æra which one would not have expected to prove auspicious to the cause of mirth.

Much about the same time rose Mr Congreve, and Sir John Vanbrugh; who, without any invidious reflection on the genius of others, gave a new life to the stage, and restored it to reputation, which, before their appearance, had been for some time sinking. Happy would it have been for the world, and some advantage to the memory of these comic writers, if they had discovered their wit, without any mixture of that licentiousness which, while it pleased, tended to corrupt the audience.

iv THE LIFE OF

The first step our Author made into life, was in the character of an Ensign in the army. He was possessed of a very ready wit, and an agreeable elocution. He happened somewhere in his winter quarters, to contract an acquaintance with Sir Thomas Skipwith, and received a particular obligation from him. He had very early discovered a taste for dramatic writing, to improve which he made some attempts in that way, and had the draft, or out-lines of two plays lying by him, at the time his acquaintance commenced with Sir Thomas. This gentleman possessed a large share in a theatrical patent, though he very little concerned himself in the conduct of it; but that he might not appear altogether remiss, he thought to procure some advantage to the stage, by having our Author's play, called *The Relapse*, to be acted upon it. In this he was not disappointed; for *The Relapse* succeeded beyond the warmest expectation, and raised Vanbrugh's name very high amongst the writers for the stage.

Though this play met with greater applause than the Author expected, yet it was not without its enemies. These were people of the graver sort, who blamed the looseness of the scenes, and the unguarded freedom of the dialect.

Being encouraged by the success of *The Relapse*, he yielded to the solicitation of Lord Hallifax, who had read some of the loose sheets of his *Provok'd Wife*, to finish that piece; and after throwing them into a proper form, gave the play to the theatre in Lincoln's-Inn-Fields. Though Sir John had a greater inclination to serve the other company, yet the request of Lord Hallifax, so eminent a patron of the poets, could not be resisted. Sir Thomas Skipwith was not offended at so reasonable a compliance, and *The Provok'd Wife* was acted 1698, with success. Some critics likewise objected against this as a loose performance; and that it taught the married women how to revenge themselves on their husbands who should offend them.

The play has indeed this moral, That such husbands as resemble Sir John Brute, may expect that neglected

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VANBRUGH.

beauty, and abused virtue, may be provoked to yield to the motives of revenge, and that the forcible solicitations of an agreeable person, who not only demonstrates a value, but a passion for what the possessor slight, may be sufficiently prevalent with an injur'd wife to forfeit her honour.

Though this event may often fall out, that the brutality of a husband produces the infidelity of a wife, yet it need not be shewn upon the stage; women are not generally so tame in their natures, as to bear neglect with patience, and the natural resentments of the human heart will without any other monitor point out the method of revenge. Besides, every husband ought not to be deemed a brute, because a too delicate, or ceremonious wife shall, in the abundance of her caprice, bestow upon him that appellation. Many women who have beheld this representation, may have been stimulated to imitate Lady Brute in her method of revenge, without having suffered her provocation. This play verifies the observation of Mr. Pope,

That Van wants grace, who never wanted wit.

The next play which Sir John Vanbrugh introduced upon the stage was *Æsop*, a comedy, in two parts, acted at the theatre-royal in Drury-Lane, 1698. This was originally written in French, by Mr. Boursart, about six years before; but the scenes of *Sir Polidorus Hogstye*, *the Players*, *the Senator*, and *the Beau*, were added by our Author. This performance contains a great deal of general satire, and useful morality; notwithstanding which it met with but a cold reception from the audience, and its run terminated in about eight or nine days. This seemed the more surprising to men of taste, as the French comedy from which it was taken, was played to crowded audiences for a month together. Sir John has rather improved upon the original, by adding new scenes, than suffered it to be diminished in a translation, but the French and the English taste was in that particular very different. We cannot better account for the ill success of this excellent piece, than in the

VI THE LIFE OF

words of Mr Cibber's *Apology for his own Life*. When speaking of this play, he has the following observation :

'The character that delivers precepts of wisdom is, in some sort, severe upon the auditor, for shewing him one wiser than himself; but when folly is his object, he applauds himself for being wiser than the coxcomb he laughs at. And who is not more pleased with an occasion to commend, than to accuse himself?'

Sir John Vanbrugh, it is said, had great facility in writing, and is not a little to be admired for the spirit, ease, and readiness, with which he produced his plays. Notwithstanding his extraordinary expedition, there is a clear and lively simplicity in his wit, that is equally distant from the pedantry of learning, and the lowness of scurrility. As the face of a fine lady, with her hair undressed, may appear in the morning in its brightest glow of beauty; such were the productions of Vanbrugh, adorned with only the negligent graces of Nature.

Mr Cibber observes, that there is something so catching to the ear, so easy to the memory in all he wrote, that it was observed by the actors of his time, that the style of no author whatsoever gave the memory less trouble than that of Sir John Vanbrugh, which he himself has confirmed by a pleasing experience. His wit and humour was so little laboured, that his most entertaining scenes seemed to be no more than his common conversation committed to paper. As his conceptions were so full of life and humour, it is not much to be wondered at, if his muse should be sometimes too warm to wait the slow pace of judgment, or to endure the drudgery of forming a regular fable to them.

The reputation which Sir John gained by his comedies, was rewarded with greater advantages than what arise from the usual profits of writing for the stage. He was appointed Clarencieux King at Arms, a place which he some time held, and at last disposed of. In August 1716, he was appointed surveyor of the works at Greenwich Hospital: he was likewise made comptroller-general of his Majesty's works, and surveyor of

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the gardens and waters, the profits of which places collectively considered, must amount to a very considerable sum.

In some part of our Author's life, (for we cannot justly ascertain the time), he gratified an inclination of visiting France. As curiosity no doubt induced him to pass over to that country, he lost no time in making such observations as could enable him to discern the spirit and genius of that polite people. His taste for architecture excited him to take a survey of the fortifications in that kingdom; but the ardour of his curiosity drew him into a snare, out of which he found great difficulty to escape. When he was one day surveying some fortifications with the strictest attention, he was taken notice of by an engineer, secured by authority, and then carried prisoner to the Bastile in Paris. The French were confirmed in suspicions of his design, by several plans being found in his possession at the time he was seized upon; but as the French, except in cases of heresy, use their prisoners with gentleness and humanity, Sir John found his confinement so endurable, that he amused himself in drawing rude draughts of some comedies. This circumstance raising curiosity in Paris, several of the noblesse visited him in the Bastile, when Sir John, who spoke their language with fluency and elegance, insinuated himself into their favour by the vivacity of his wit, and the peculiarity of his humour. He gained so much upon their affections, that they represented him to the French King in an innocent light, and by that means procured his liberty some days before the solicitation came from England.

Sir John Vanbrugh formed a project of building a stately theatre in the Hay market; for which he had interest enough to raise a subscription of thirty persons of quality at 100*l.* each, in consideration whereof every subscriber for his own life should be admitted to whatever entertainments should be publicly performed there, without farther payment for entrance.

On the first stone that was laid in this theatre, were inscribed the words *LITTLE WHIG*, as a compliment

to a lady of extraordinary beauty, then the celebrated toast, and pride of that party. In the year 1706, when this house was finished, Mr Betterton and his copartners put themselves under the direction of Sir John Vanbrugh and Mr Congreve; imagining that the conduct of two such eminent authors would restore their ruined affairs; but they found their expectations were too sanguine; for though Sir John was an expeditious writer, yet Mr Congreve was too judicious to let any thing come unfinished out of his hands; besides, every proper convenience of a good theatre had been sacrificed to shew the audience a vast triumphal piece of architecture, in which plays, by means of the spaciousness of the dome, could not be successfully represented, because the actors could not be distinctly heard.

Not long before this time, the Italian Opera began to steal into England, but in as rude a disguise, and as unlike itself as possible; notwithstanding which, the new monster pleased, though it had neither grace, melody, nor action to recommend it. To strike in therefore with the prevailing fashion, Vanbrugh and Congreve opened their new theatre in the Hay-market, with a translated Opera, set to Italian music, called *The Triumph of Love*; but it met with a cold reception, being performed only three days to thin houses.

Immediately upon the failure of the Opera, Vanbrugh produced his comedy called *The Confederacy*, greatly improved from the *Bourgeois à la mode* of Dancour. The success of this play was not equal to its merit; for it is written in an uncommon vein of humour, and abounds with the most lively strokes of railery. The prospects of gain from this theatre were so very unpromising, that Congreve, in a few months, gave up his share and interest in the government wholly to Sir John Vanbrugh; who being now sole proprietor of the house, was under a necessity to exert himself in its support. As he had a happier talent for throwing the English spirit into his translations of French plays, than any former author who had borrowed from

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them, he, in the same season, gave the public three more of that kind; viz.

1. *The Cuckold in Conceit*, from the *Cocu imaginaire* of Moliere.

2. *Squire Treelooby*, from his *Monf. de Pourceaugnac*.

—These two were never printed from Sir John's manuscript.

3. *The Mistake*, from the *Depit Amoureux* of the same author.

However well executed these pieces were, yet they came to the ear in the same undistinguished utterance, by which almost all their plays had equally suffered; for as few could plainly hear, it was not likely a great many would applaud.

In this situation it appears, that nothing but the union of the two companies could restore the stage to its former reputation.

Sir John Vanbrugh therefore, tired of theatrical management, thought of disposing of his whole farm to some industrious tenant, that might put it into better condition. It was to Mr Owen Swiny that, in the exigence of his affairs, he made an offer of his actors, under such agreements of salary as might be made with them; and of his house, cloaths, and scenes, with the Queen's license to employ them, upon payment of the casual rent of five pounds every acting day, and not to exceed 700 l. *per ann.* With this proposal Mr Swiny complied, and governed that stage till another great theatrical revolution.

There are two plays of our Author not yet mentioned, viz. *The False Friend*, a comedy, acted in 1698, and, *A Journey to London*, a comedy, which he left unfinished. This last piece was finished by Mr Cibber to a very great advantage, and now is one of the best comedies in our language. Mr Cibber, in his prologue, takes particular notice of our Author's virtuous intention in composing this piece, which, he says, was to make some amends for those loose scenes which, in the fire of his youth, he had, with more regard to applause than virtue, exhibited to the public.

Sir John indeed appears to have been often sensible of the immorality of his scenes; for in the year 1725, when the company of comedians was called upon, in a manner that could not be resisted, to revive *The Provoked Wife*, the Author, who was conscious how justly it was exposed to censure, thought proper to substitute a new scene in the fourth act, in place of another, in which, in the wantonness of his wit and humour, he had made a rake talk like a rake, in the habit of a clergyman. To avoid which offence, he put the same debauchee into the undress of a woman of quality; for the character of a fine lady, it seems, is not reckoned so indelibly sacred, as that of a churchman. Whatever follies he exposed in the petticoat, kept him at least clear of his former imputed profaneness, and appeared now to the audience innocently ridiculous.

This ingenious dramatist died of a quinsy at his house in Whitehall, on the 26th of March 1726. He was a man of a lively imagination, of a facetious, and engaging humour, and as he lived esteemed by all his acquaintance, so he died without leaving one enemy to reproach his memory; a felicity which few men of public employments, or possessed of so distinguished a genius, ever enjoyed. He has left behind him monuments of fame, which can never perish but with taste and politeness.

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PROLOGUE.

Spoken by Mr WILKS.

*THIS Play took birth from principles of truth,
To make amends for errors past of youth.*

A bard that's now no more, in riper days,

Conscious review'd the licence of his plays:

And though applause his wanton Muse had fir'd,

Himself condemn'd what sensual minds admir'd.

At length he own'd that plays should let you see

Not only what you are, but ought to be;

Though vice was natural, 'twas never meant

The Stage should show it; but for punishment!

Warm with that thought, his Muse once more took flame,

Resolv'd to bring licentious life to shame.

Such was the piece his latest pen design'd,

But left no traces of his plan behind.

Luxuriant scenes, unprun'd, or half contriv'd;

Yet, through the mass, his native fire surviv'd:

Rough, as rich ore, in mines the treasure lay,

Yet still 'twas rich, and forms at length a play.

In which the bold compiler boasts no merit,

But that his pains have sav'd your scenes of spirit.

Not scenes that would a noisy joy impart,

But such as hush the mind and warm the heart.

From praise of hands no sure account he draws,

But fix'd attention is sincere applause.

If then (for hard you'll own the task) his art

Can to these embryo-scenes new life impart,

The living proudly would exclude his lays,

And to the buried Bard resigns the praise.

Dramatis Personæ.

Lord TOWNLY, of a regular life.

Mr MANLY, an admirer of Lady Grace.

Sir FRANCIS WRONGHEAD, a country gentleman.

Squire RICHARD, his son, a mere whelp.

Count BASSET, a gamester.

JOHN MOODY, servant to Sir Francis, an honest clown.

Lady TOWNLY, immoderate in her pursuit of pleasures.

Lady GRACE, sister to Lord Townly, of exemplary virtue.

Lady WRONGHEAD, wife to Sir Francis, inclined to be a fine lady.

Miss JENNY, her daughter, pert and forward.

Mrs MOTHERLY, one that lets lodgings.

MYRTILLA, her niece, seduced by the Count.

Mrs TRUSTY, Lady Townly's woman.

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THE
PROVOK'D HUSBAND:
O R
A JOURNEY to LONDON.

ACT I. SCENE I.

SCENE, Lord Townly's Apartment.

Lord TOWNLY *solas.*

WHY did I marry!—Was it not evident, my plain, rational scheme of life was impracticable, with a woman of so different a way of thinking?—Is there one article of it, that she has not broke in upon?—Yes,—Let me do her justice—Her reputation—That—I have no reason to believe is in question—But then how long her profligate course of pleasures may make her able to keep it—is a shocking question! and her presumption while she keeps it—inupportable! for on the pride of that single virtue she seems to lay it down, as a fundamental point, that the free indulgence of every other vice this fertile town affords, is the birth-right prerogative of a woman of quality—Amazing! that a creature so warm in the pursuit of her pleasures, should never cast one thought towards her happiness—Thus, while she admits no lover, she thinks it a greater merit still, in her chastity, not to care for her husband; and while she herself is solacing in one continual round of cards and good company, he, poor wretch! is left at large, to take care of his own contentment—'Tis time, indeed, some care were taken, and speedily there shall be—Yet let me not be rash—Perhaps this disappointment of my heart may make me too impatient; and some tempers, when reproach'd, grow more untractable.—Here she comes—Let me be calm a while.

14 The PROVOK'D HUSBAND; or, Act I.

Enter Lady TOWNLY.

Going out so soon after dinner, Madam?

La. Town. Lard, my Lord! what can I possibly do at home?

L. Town. What does my sister, Lady Grace, do at home?

La. Town. Why, that is to me amazing! have you ever any pleasure at home!

L. Town. It might be in your power, Madam, I confess, to make it a little more comfortable to me.

La. Town. Comfortable! and so, my good Lord, you would really have a woman of my rank and spirit stay at home to comfort her husband! Lord! what notions of life some men have!

L. Town. Don't you think, Madam, some Ladies notions are full as extravagant?

La. Town. Yes, my Lord, when the tame doves live coop'd within the pen of your precepts, I do think 'em prodigious indeed!

L. Town. And when they fly wild about this town, Madam, pray what must the world think of 'em then?

La. Town. Oh! this world is not so ill bred as to quarrel with any woman for liking it.

L. Town. Nor am I, Madam, a husband so wellbred, as to bear my wife's being so fond of it; in short, the life you lead, Madam——

La. Town. Is, to me, the pleasantest life in the world.

L. Town. I should not dispute your taste, Madam, if a woman had a right to please no body but herself.

La. Town. Why, whom would you have her please?

L. Town. Sometimes her husband.

La. Town. And don't you think a husband under the same obligation?

L. Town. Certainly.

La. Town. Why then we are agreed, my Lord—— For if I never go abroad, 'till I am weary of being at home—which you know is the case—is it not equally reasonable, not to come home 'till one's weary of being abroad!

Act I. A JOURNEY to LONDON. 19

L. Town. If this be your rule of life, Madam, 'tis time to ask you one serious question?

La. Town. Don't let it be long a coming then—— for I am in haste.

L. Town. Madam, when I am serious, I expect a serious answer.

La. Town. Before I know the question?

L. Town. Pshaw—— have I power, Madam, to make you serious by entreaty?

La. Town. You have.

L. Town. And you promise to answer me sincerely?

La. Town. Sincerely.

L. Town. Now then recollect your thoughts, and tell me seriously, Why you married me?

La. Town. You insist upon truth, you say?

L. Town. I think I have a right to it.

La. Town. Why, then, my Lord, to give you, at once, a proof of my obedience and sincerity—— I think—— I married—— to take off that restraint, that lay upon my pleasures, while I was a single woman.

L. Town. How, Madam! is any woman under less restraint after marriage, than before it?

La. Town. O my Lord! my Lord! they are quite different creatures! Wives have infinite liberties in life, that would be terrible in an unmarried woman to take.

L. Town. Name one.

La. Town. Fifty, if you please!—— to begin then, in the morning—— A married woman may have men at her toilet; invite them to dinner; appoint them a party in a stage-box at the play; ingross the conversation there; call them by their Christian names; talk louder than the players.—— From thence jaunt into the city—— take a frolicksome supper at an India house—— perhaps, in her *gaiete de cœur*, toast a pretty fellow—— Then clatter again to this end of the town; break, with the morning, into an assembly; crowd to the hazard-table; throw a familiar *levant* upon some sharp lurching man of quality, and if he de-

16 The PROVOK'D HUSBAND; or, Act I.
mands his money, turn it off with a loud laugh, and
cry—you'll owe it him, to vex him, ha, ha!

L. Town. Prodigious! *[Aside.*

La. Town. These now, my Lord, are some few of
the many modish amusements, that distinguish the pri-
vilege of a wife, from that of a single woman.

L. Town. Death! Madam! what law has made these
liberties less scandalous in a wife, than in an unmarried
woman?

La. Town. Why, the strongest law in the world, cus-
tom——custom time out of mind, my Lord.

L. Town. Custom, Madam, is the law of fools: but
it shall never govern me.

La. Town. Nay then, my Lord, 'tis time for me to
observe the laws of prudence.

L. Town. I wish I could see an instance of it.

La. Town. You shall have one this moment, my Lord:
for I think, when a man begins to lose his temper at
home, if a woman has any prudence, why——she'll
go abroad till he comes to himself again. *[Going.*

L. Town. Hold, Madam——I am amaz'd you are
not more uneasy at the life you lead! You don't want
sense! and yet seem void of all humanity: for with a
blush I say it, I think I have not wanted love.

La. Town. Oh! don't say that, my Lord, if you sup-
pose I have my senses.

L. Town. What is it I have done to you? what can
you complain of?

La. Town. Oh! nothing in the least: 'tis true you
have heard me say, I have owed my Lord Lurcher an
hundred pounds these three weeks——but what then?
——a husband is not liable to his wife's debts of
honour, you know——and if a silly woman will be
uneasy about money she can't be su'd for, what's that
to him? as long as he loves her, to be sure, she can
have nothing to complain of.

L. Town. By Heaven, if my whole fortune thrown
into your lap, could make you delight in the cheerful
duties of a wife, I should think myself a gainer by the
purchase.

ACT I A JOURNEY to LONDON 17

La. Town. That is, my Lord, I might receive your whole estate, provided you were sure I would not spend a shilling of it.

L. Town. No, Madam; were I master of your heart, your pleasures would be mine; but different as they are, I'll feed even your follies, to deserve it.—— Perhaps you may have some other trifling debts of honour abroad, that keep you out of humour at home.—— at least it shall not be my fault, if I have not more of your company.—— There, there's a bill of five hundred——and now, Madam——

La. Town. And now, my Lord, down to the ground I thank you.—— Now am I convinced, were I weak enough to love this man, I should never get a single guinea from him. [Aside.]

L. Town. If it be no offence, Madam——

La. Town. Say what you please, my Lord; I am in that harmony of spirits, it is impossible to put me out of humour.

L. Town. How long in reason then do you think that sum ought to last you?

La. Town. Oh, my dear, dear Lord! now you have spoil'd all again; how is it possible I should answer for an event, that so utterly depends upon fortune? But to shew you, that I am more inclin'd to get money, than to throw it away——I have a strong possession, that with this five hundred, I shall win five thousand.

L. Town. Madam, if you were to win ten thousand, it would be no satisfaction to me.

La. Town. O, the churl! ten thousand! what! not so much as with I might win ten thousand!—— Ten thousand! O, the charming sum! what infinite pretty things might a woman of spirit do with ten thousand guineas! O' my conscience, if she were a woman of true spirit—she—she might lose 'em all again.

L. Town. And I had rather it should be so, Madam; provided I could be sure, that were the last you would lose.

La. Town. Well, my Lord, to let you see I design to play all the good housewife I can, I am now going to

18 The PROVOK'D HUSBAND, or, ACT I.

a party at Quadrille, only to piddle with a little of it, at poor two guineas a fish, with the Duchess of Quiter right.

[Exit Lady Townly.

L. Town. Insensible creature! neither reproaches, or indulgence, kindness, or severity, can wake her to the least reflection! Continual licence has lull'd her into such a lethargy of care, that she speaks of her excesses with the same easy confidence, as if they were so many virtues. What a turn has her head taken!— But how to cure it— I am afraid the physick must be strong, that reaches her— Lenitives, I see, are to no purpose— take my friend's opinion— Manly will speak freely— my sister with tenderness to both sides. They know my ease— I'll talk with 'em.

Enter a SERVANT.

Serv. Mr Manly, my Lord, has sent to know if your Lordship was at home.

L. Town. They did not deny me?

Serv. No, my Lord.

L. Town. Very well; step up to my sister, and say, I desire to speak with her.

Serv. Lady Grace is here, my Lord. [Exit Serv.

Enter Lady GRACE.

L. Town. So, Lady fair; what pretty weapon have you been killing your time with?

La. Grace. A huge folio, that has almost kill'd me— I think I have half read my eyes out.

L. Town. O! you should not pore so much just after dinner, child.

La. Grace. That's true; but any body's thoughts are better than always one's own, you know.

L. Town. Who's there?

Enter SERVANT.

Leave word at the door, I am at home to no body but Mr Manly.

La. Grace. And why is he excepted, pray, my Lord?

L. Town. I hope, Madam, you have no objection to his company?

ACT I. A JOURNEY to LONDON. 79.

La. Grace. Your particular orders, upon my being here, look, indeed, as if you thought I had not.

L. Town. And your ladyship's enquiry into the reason of those orders, shews at least, it was not a matter indifferent to you!

La. Grace. Lord! you make the oddest constructions, brother!

L. Town. Look you, my grave Lady Grace—in one serious word—I wish you had him.

La. Grace. I can't help that.

L. Town. Had you can't help it! ha, ha! The flat simplicity of that reply was admirable!

La. Grace. Pooh! you teize one, brother.

L. Town. Come, I beg pardon, child—this is not a point, I grant you, to trifle upon; therefore I hope you'll give me leave to be serious.

La. Grace. If you desire it, brother; though upon my word, as to Mr Manty's having any serious thoughts of me,—I know nothing of it.

L. Town. Well—there's nothing wrong in your making a doubt of it—But in short, I find, by his conversation of late, that he has been looking round the world for a wife; and if you were to look round the world for a husband, he's the first man I would give to you.

La. Grace. Then, whenever he makes me any offer, brother, I will certainly tell you of it.

L. Town. O! that's the last thing he'll do; he'll never make you any offer, 'till he's pretty sure it won't be refus'd.

La. Grace. Now you make me curious. Pray, did he ever make any offer of that kind to you?

L. Town. Not directly; but that imports nothing; he is a man too well acquainted with the female world, to be brought into a high opinion of any one woman, without some well examin'd proof of her merit: yet I have reason to believe, that your good sense, your turn of mind, and your way of life, have brought him to so favourable a one of you, that a few days will reduce him to talk plainly to me: which as yet (notwithstand-

30 The PROVOK'D HUSBAND; or, ACT I.

ing our friendship) I have neither declin'd nor encourag'd him to.

La. Grace. I am mighty glad we are so near in our way of thinking: for, to tell you the truth, he is much upon the same terms with me: you know he has a satirical turn; but never lashes any folly, without giving due encomiums to its opposite virtue: and upon such occasions, he is sometimes particular, in turning his compliments upon me, which I don't receive with any reserve, lest he should imagine I take them to myself.

L. Town. You are right, child: when a man of merit makes his addresses, good sense may give him an answer, without scorn, or coquetry.

La. Grace. Hush! he's here——

Enter Mr MANLY.

Man. My Lord, your most obedient.

L. Town. Dear Manly, yours——I was thinking to send to you.

Man. Then, I am glad I am here, my Lord——
La. Grace. I kiss your hands!——What, only you two! How many visits may a man make, before he falls into such unfashionable company? A brother and sister soberly sitting at home, when the whole town is a gadding! I question if there is so particular a *tete a tete*, again, in the whole parish of St. James's.

La. Grace. Fy, fy! Mr. Manly; how censorious you are!

Man. I had not made the reflection, Madam, but that I saw you an exception to it—Where's my lady?

L. Town. That, I believe, is impossible to guess.

Man. Then I won't try, my Lord——

L. Town. But, 'tis probable I may hear of her, by that time I have been four or five hours in bed.

Man. Now, if that were my case——I believe I——But I beg pardon, my Lord.

L. Town. Indeed, Sir, you shall not: you will oblige me, if you speak out; for it was upon this head I wanted to see you.

Man. Why, then, my Lord, since you oblige me to

ACT I.

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Act I. A JOURNEY to LONDON. 21

proceed——If that were my case——I believe I should certainly sleep in another house.

La. Grace. How do you mean?

Man. Only a compliment, Madam.

La. Grace. A compliment!

Man. Yes, Madam, in rather turning myself out of doors than her.

La. Grace. Don't you think that would be going too far?

Man. I don't know—but it might, Madam; for, in strict justice, I think she ought rather to go, than I.

La. Grace. This is new doctrine, Mr Manly.

Man. As old, Madam, as Love, Honour, and Obey! When a woman will stop at nothing that's wrong, why should a man balance any thing that's right?

La. Grace. Bless me, but this is fomenting things—

Man. Fomentations, Madam, are sometimes necessary to dispel tumours: tho' I don't directly advise my Lord to do this——This is only what, upon the same provocation, I would do myself.

La. Grace. Ay, ay! you would do! Batchelors wives, indeed, are finely govern'd.

Man. If the married mens were as well——I am apt to think we should not see so many mutual plagues taking the air in separate coaches.

La. Grace. Well, but suppose it your own case; would you part with a wife, because she now and then stays out, in the best company?

L. Town. Well said, Lady Grace! come, stand up for the privilege of your sex: this is like to be a warm debate; I shall edify.

Man. Madam, I think a wife, after midnight, has no occasion to be in better company than her husband's; and that frequent unreasonable hours make the best company—the worst company she can fall into.

La. Grace. But if people of condition are to keep company with one another, how is it possible to be done unless one conforms to their hours?

Man. I can't find, that any woman's good breeding obliges her to conform to other people's vices.

22 The PROVOK'D HUSBAND; or, ACT I.

L. Town. I doubt, child, here we are got a little on the wrong side of the question.

La. Grace. Why so, my Lord? I can't think the case so bad, as Mr Manly states it—People of quality are not ty'd down to the rules of those who have their fortunes to make.

Man. No people, Madam, are above being ty'd down to some rules, that have fortunes to lose.

La. Grace. Pooh, I'm sure, if you were to take my side of the argument you would be able to say something more for it.

L. Town. Well, what say you to that, Manly?

Man. Why, 'troth, my Lord, I have something to say.

La. Grace. Ay, that I should be glad to hear now.

L. Town. Out with it.

Man. Then in one word, this, my Lord; I have often thought that the misconduct of my Lady has, in a great measure, been owing to your Lordship's treatment of her.

La. Grace. Bless me!

L. Town. My treatment!

Man. Ay, my Lord, you so idoliz'd her before marriage, that you even indulg'd her, like a mistress, after it: in short, you continu'd the lover, when you should have taken up the husband.

La. Grace. O frightful! this is worse than t'other! can a husband love a wife too well?

Man. As easy, Madam, as a wife may love her husband too little.

L. Town. So, you two are never like to agree, I find.

La. Grace. Don't be positive, Brother:—I am afraid we are both of a mind already. [*Aside.*] And do you, at this rate, ever hope to be married, Mr Manly?

Man. Never, Madam, 'till I can meet with a woman that likes my doctrine.

La. Grace. 'Tis pity but your mistress should hear it.

Man. Pity me, Madam, when I marry the woman that won't hear it.

La. Grace. I think, at least, he can't say, that's me.

[*Aside.*]

Man. And so, my Lord, by giving her more power than was needful, she has none where she wants it; having such entire possession of you, she is not mistress of herself! And, mercy on us! how many fine womens heads have been turn'd upon the same occasion!

L. Town. O Manly! 'tis too true! there's the source of my disquiet! she knows, and has abus'd her power! nay, I am still so weak (with shame I speak it) 'tis not an hour ago, that in the midst of my impatience—I gave her another bill for five hundred to throw away.

Man. Well—my Lord! to let you see I am sometimes upon the side of good nature, I won't absolutely blame you; for the greater your indulgence, the more you have to reproach her with.

La. Grace. Ay, Mr Manly! here now, I begin to come in with you: who knows, my Lord, you may have a good account of your kindnefs!

Man. That, I am afraid, we had not best depend upon: but since you have had so much patience, my Lord, even go on with it a day or two more; and upon her Ladyship's next sally, be a little rounder in your expostulations; if that don't work—drop her some cool hints of a determin'd reformation, and leave her—to breakfast upon 'em.

L. Town. You are perfectly right! how valuable is a friend, in our anxiety!

Man. Therefore, to divert that, my Lord, I beg, for the present, we may call another cause.

La. Grace. Ay, for Goodness sake, let's have done with this.

L. Town. With all my heart.

La. Grace. Have you no news abroad, Mr Manly?

Man. A propos.—I have some, Madam; and I believe, my Lord, as extraordinary in its kind—

L. Town. Pray, let's have it.

Man. Do you know, that your country neighbour, and my wise kinsman, Sir Francis Wronghead, is coming to town with his whole family?

L. Town. The fool! what can be his business here?

24 The PROVOK'D HUSBAND; or, Act I.

Man. Oh! of the last importance, I'll assure you—
No less than the business of the nation.

L. Town. Explain!

Man. He has carried his election—against Sir John Worthland.

L. Town. The deuce! what! for—for—

Man. The famous borough of Guzzledown!

L. Town. A proper representative, indeed.

La. Grace. Pray, Mr Manly, don't I know him?

Man. You have din'd with him, Madam, when I was
last down with my Lord, at Bellmont.

La. Grace. Was not that he, that got a little merry
before dinner, and overfet the tea-table, in making his
compliments to my lady?

Man. The same.

La. Grace. Pray what are his circumstances? I know
but very little of him.

Man. Then he is worth your knowing, I can tell you,
Madam. His estate, if clear, I believe, might be a
good two thousand pounds a-year: though, as it was
left him, saddled with two jointures, and two weighty
mortgages upon it, there is no saying what it is—
But that he might be sure never to mend it, he married
a profuse young hussy, for love, without a penny of mo-
ney! Thus, having, like his brave ancestors, provided
heirs for the family, (for his dove breeds like a tame
pidgeon), he now finds children and interest-money make
such a bawling about his ears, that, at last, he has ta-
ken the friendly advice of his kinsman, the good Lord
Danglecourt, to run his estate two thousand pounds
more in debt, to put the whole management of what's
left into Paul Pillage's hands, that he may be at lei-
sure himself to retrieve his affairs, by being a parlia-
ment-man.

L. Town. A most admirable scheme, indeed!

Man. And with this politic prospect, he's now upon
his journey to London—

L. Town. What can it end in?

Man. Pooh! a journey into the country again,

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ACT I. A JOURNEY to LONDON. 25

L. Town. Do you think he'll stir, 'till his money's gone? or, at least, 'till the session is over?

Man. If my intelligence is right, my Lord, he won't sit long enough to give his vote for a turnpike.

L. Town. How so?

Man. O! a bitter business! he had scarce a vote in the whole town, beside the returning officer: Sir John will certainly have it heard at the bar of the house, and send him about his business again.

L. Town. Then he has made a fine business of it, indeed!

Man. Which, as far as my little interest will go, shall be done, in as few days as possible.

L. Grace. But why would you ruin the poor gentleman's fortune. Mr Manly?

Man. No, Madam, I would only spoil his project, to save his fortune.

L. Grace. How are you concern'd enough, to do either?

Man. Why—I have some obligations to the family, Madam: I enjoy, at this time, a pretty estate, which Sir Francis was heir at law to: but—by his being a booby, the last will of an obstinate old uncle gave it to me.

Enter a SERVANT.

Serv. to Manly.] Sir, here's one of your servants from your house, desires to speak with you.

Man. Will you give him leave to come in, my Lord?

L. Town. Sir—the ceremony's of your own making.

Enter MANLY's Servant.

Man. Well, James; what's the matter now?

James. Sir, here's John Moody's just come to town; he says Sir Francis, and all the family, will be here to-night, and is in a great hurry to speak with you.

Man. Where is he?

James. At our house, Sir; he has been gaping and stumping about the streets, in his dirty boots, and asking every one he meets, if they can tell him where he

26 The PROVOK'D HUSBAND; or, Act I.

may have a good lodging for a parliament-man, till he hires a handsome whole house, fit for all his family, for the winter.

Man. I am afraid, my Lord, I must wait upon Mr Moody.

L. Town. Pr'ythee, let's have him here: he will divert us.

Man. O my Lord, he's such a cub! Not but he's so near common sense, that he passes for a wit in the family.

La. Grace. I beg of all things, we may have him: I am in love with Nature, let her dress be never so homely!

Man. Then desire him to come hither, James.

[Exit James.]

La. Grace. Pray, what may be Mr Moody's post?

Man. Oh! his *maitre d' hotel*, his butler, his bailiff, his hind; his huntsman; and sometimes——his companion.

L. Town. It runs in my head, that the moment this knight has set him down in the house, he will get up, to give them the earliest proof of what importance he is to the public, in his own country.

Man. Yes, and when they have heard him, he will find, that his utmost importance stands valued at——sometimes being invited to dinner.

La. Grace. And her Ladyship, I suppose, will make as considerable a figure in her sphere too.

Man. That you may depend upon: for, if I don't mistake, she has ten times more of the jade in her, than she yet knows of; and she will so improve in this rich soil, in a month, that she will visit all the ladies that will let her into their houses; and run in debt to all the shop-keepers that will let her into their books: in short, before her important spouse has made five pounds, by his eloquence, at Westminster, she will have lost five hundred at dice and quadrille, in the parish of St James's.

L. Town. So that, by that time he is declared unduly elected, a swarm of duns will be ready for their money; and his Worship——will be ready for a jail.

ACT I. A JOURNEY to LONDON. 17

Man. Yes, yes, that I reckon will close the account of this hopeful journey to London.—But see here comes the 'fore-horse of the team!

Enter JOHN MOODY.

Oh, honest John!

J. Moody. Ad's wounds, and heart! Measter Manly! I'm glad I ha' fun ye. Lawd, lawd! give me a buss! Why, that's friendly now: flesh! I thought we should never ha' got hither! Well, and how d'ye do, Measter? —Good-lack! I beg pardon for my bawldness— I did not see 'at his honour was here.

L. Town. Mr Moody, your servant: I am glad to see you in London; I hope all the good family is well.

J. Moody. Thanks be prais'd your Honour, they are all in pretty good heart; thof we have had a power of crosses upo' the road.

L. Grace. I hope my Lady has had no hurt, Mr Moody.

J. Moody. Noa, and please your Ladyship, she was never in better humour: There's money enough stirring now.

Man. What has been the matter, John?

J. Moody. Why, we came up in such a hurry, you mun think, that our tackle was not so tight as it should be.

Man. Come, tell us all. —Pray, how do they travel?

J. Moody. Why, i' the awld coach, Measter; and 'cause my Lady loves to do things handsome, to be sure, she would have a couple of cart-horses clapt to th' four old geldings, that neighbours might see she went up to London in her coach and fix! and so Giles Joulter, the plowman, rides postilion!

Man. Very well! The journey sets out as it shou'd do. [*Aside.*] What, do they bring all the children with them too?

J. Moody. Noa, noa, only the young Squoire, and Miss Jenny. The other foive are all out at board, at half a crown a-head, a-week, with John Growse, at Smoke-Dunghill farm.

Man. Good again! a right English academy for younger children!

J. Moody. Anon, Sir? [Not understanding him.]

La. Grace. Poor souls, what will become of 'em?

J. Moody. Nay, nay, for that matter, Madam, they are in very good hands: Joan loves 'um as thof they were all her own: for she was wet nurse to every mother's babe of 'um.—Ay, ay, they'll ne'er want for a belly-full there!

La. Grace. What simplicity!

Man. The Lud a' mercy upon all good folks! What work will these people make! [Holding up his hands.]

L. Town. And when do you expect them here, John?

J. Moody. Why, we were in hopes to ha' come yesterday, an' it had no' been, that th' owld weazlebelly horse tyr'd: and then we were so cruelly loaden, that the two fore-wheels came crash down at once, in Waggon-rut Lane, and there we lost four hours 'fore we cou'd set things to rights again.

Man. So they bring all their baggage with the coach then?

J. Moody. Ay, ay, and good store on't there is—Why, my Lady's geer alone were as much as fill'd four portmantel trunks, beside the great deal-box, that heavy Ralph and the monkey sit upon behind.

L. Town. *La. Grace,* and *Man.* Ha, ha, ha!

La. Grace. Well, Mr Moody, and pray, how many are they within the coach?

J. Moody. Why, there's my Lady, and his Worship; and the young squire, and Miss Jenny, and the fat lap-dog, and my Lady's maid, Mrs Handy, and Doll Tripe the cook, that's all.—Only Doll puked a little with riding backward, so they hoisted her into the coach-box, and then her stomach was easy.

La. Grace. Oh, I see 'em! I see 'em go by me. Ha, ha!

[Laughing.]

J. Moody. Then, you mun think, Measter, there was some stowage for the belly, as well as th' back too; children are apt to be famisht upo' the road; so we had such cargoas of plumb-cake, and baskets of tongues,

ACT I. A JOURNEY to LONDON. 29

and biscuits, and cheese, and cold boil'd beef—and then, in case of sickness, bottles of cherry brandy, plague-water, sack, tent, and strong beer so plenty as made th' owld coach crack again! Mercy upon them! and send 'em all well to town, I say.

Man. Ay, and well out on't again, John.

J. Moody. Ods bud, Measter! you're a wise mon; and for that matter, so am I—Whoam's whoam, I say: I'm sure we ha' got but little good, e'er sin' we turn'd our backs on't. Nothing but mischief! Some devil's trick or other plagued us, a' th' dey lung! Crack, goes one thing! hawnee, goes another! Woa, says Roger—then soule! we are all set fast in a slough. Whaw! cries Miss; scream go the maids! and bawl, just as thof they were stuck: and so, mercy on us! this was the trade from morning to night. But my Lady was in such a murrain haste to be here, that set out she would, thof I told her, it was Childermas day.

Man. These ladies, these ladies, John—

J. Moody. Ah, Measter! I ha' seen a little of 'em; and I find that the best—when she's mended, won't ha' much goodness to spare.

L. Town. Well said, John. Ha, ha!

Man. I hope, at least, you and your good woman agree still.

J. Moody. Ay, ay! much of a muchness. Bridget sticks to me: though as for her goodness—why, she was willing to come to London too——But hawld a bit! Noa, noa, says I, there may be mischief enough done without you.

Man. Why, that was bravely spoken, John, and like a man.

J. Moody. Ah, weast heart, were Measter but hawf the mon that I am——Ods wookers! thof he'll speak stawtly too sometimes——but then he canno' hawld it——no, he canno' hawld it.

L. Town. La. Grace. Man. Ha, ha, ha!

J. Moody. Ods fesh, but I mun hye me whoam! th' coach will be coming every hour naw——but Measter charg'd me to find your Worthip out; for he has hugey

30 The PROVOK'D HUSBAND; or, ACT I.

business with you; and will certainly wait upon you, by that time he can put on a clean neckcloth.

Man. O John, I'll wait upon him.

J. Moody. Why, you winno' be so kind, wull ye?

Man. If you'll tell me where you lodge.

J. Moody. Just i' th' street next to where your Worship dwells, at the sign of the Golden Ball—It's gold all over; where they sell ribbons and flappits, and other sort of geer for gentlewomen.

Man. A milliner's?

J. Moody. Ay, ay, one Mrs Motherly: waunds! she has a couple of cleaver girls there stitching i' th' fore-room.

Man. Yes, yes, she's a woman of good business, no doubt on't.—Who recommended that house to you, John?

J. Moody. The greatest good fortune in the world, sure; for as I was gaping about the streets, who should look out of the window there, but the fine gentleman, that was always riding by our coach side, as York races——Count——Basset; ay, that's he.

Man. Basset? Oh, I remember, I know him by sight.

J. Moody. Well; to be sure, as civil a gentleman to see to——

Man. As any sharper in town. [Aside.]

J. Moody. At York, he us'd to breakfast with my Lady every morning.

Man. Yes, yes, and I suppose her Ladyship will return his compliment here in town. [Aside.]

J. Moody. Well, Measter——

L. Town. My service to Sir Francis, and my Lady, John.

La. Grace. And mine, pray Mr Moody.

J. Moody. Ay, your honours, they'll be proud on't, I dare say.

Man. I'll bring my compliments myself: so, honest John——

J. Moody. Dear Measter Manly, the goodness of goodness blefs and preserve you. [Exit J. Moody.]

L. Town. What a natural creature 'tis!

ACT I. A JOURNEY TO LONDON. 31

La. Grace. Well, I can't but think John, in a wet afternoon in the country, must be very good company.

L. Town. O, the Tramontane! If this were known at half the quadrille-tables in town, they would lay down their cards to laugh at you.

La. Grace. And the minute they took them up again they would do the same at the losers.—But to let you see that I think good company may sometimes want cards to keep them together; what think you, if we three sat soberly down, to kill an hour at ombre?

Man. I shall be two hard for you, Madam.

La. Grace. No matter; I shall have as much advantage of my Lord, as you have of me.

L. Town. Say you so, Madam? Have at you, then! Here! get the ombre-table, and cards. [*Exit L. Town.*]

La. Grace. Come, Mr Manly—I know you don't forgive me now!

Man. I don't know whether I ought to forgive your thinking so, Madam. Where do you imagine I could pass my time so agreeably?

La. Grace. I'm sorry my Lord is not here to take his share of the compliment.—But he'll wonder what's become of us!

Man. I'll follow in a moment, Madam.— [*Exit La. Grace.*]

It must be so—She sees I love her—yet with what unoffending decency she avoids an explanation! How amiable is every hour of her conduct! What a vile opinion have I had of the whole sex, for these ten years past, which this sensible creature has recovered in less than one! Such a companion, sure, might compensate all the irksome disappointments, that pride, folly, and falsehood ever gave me!

Could women regulate, like her, their lives,
What Halcyon days were in the gift of wives!
Vain rovers, then, might envy what they hate;
And only fools would mock the married state. [*Exit*]

ACT II. SCENE I.

Mrs. MOTHERLY's House.

Enter Count BASSET and Mrs. MOTHERLY.

Count BASSET.

Tell you there is not such a family in England for you! Do you think I would have gone out of your lodgings for any body that was not sure to make you easy for the winter?

Moth. Nay, I see nothing against it, Sir, but the gentleman's being a parliament-man; and when people may, as it were, think one impertinent, or be out of humour, you know, when a body comes to ask for one's own—

C. Baf. Pshaw! Pr'ythee, never trouble thy head—His pay is as good as the bank!—Why, he has above two thousand a-year!

Moth. Alas-a-day! that's nothing: your people of ten thousand a-year, have ten thousand things to do with it.

C. Baf. Nay, if you are afraid of being out of your money; what do you think of going a little with me, Mrs. Motherly?

Moth. As how?

C. Baf. Why, I have a game in my hand, in which, if you'll croup me, that is, help me to play it, you shall go five hundred to nothing.

Moth. Say you so?—Why then, I go, Sir—and now pray, let's see your game.

C. Baf. Look you, in one word, my cards ly thus:—when I was down this summer at York, I happen'd to lodge in the same house with this knight's lady, that's now coming to lodge with you.

Moth. Did you so, Sir?

C. Baf. And sometimes had the honour to breakfast, and pass an idle hour with her—

ACT II. A JOURNEY to LONDON. 33

Moth. Very good; and here I suppose you would have the impudence to sup, and be busy with her.

C. Bas. Pshaw! pr'ythee, hear me.

Moth. Is this your game? I would not give sixpence for it. What! you have a passion for her pin-money—No, no, country-ladies are not so flush of it!

C. Bas. Nay, if you won't have patience—

Moth. One had need to have a good deal, I am sure, to hear you talk at this rate? Is this your way of making my poor niece Mrytilla easy?

C. Bas. Dearth! I shall do it still, if the woman will but let me speak—

Moth. Had not you a letter from her this morning?

C. Bas. I have it here in my pocket—this is it.

[*Shews it, and puts it up again.*]
Moth. Ay, but I don't find you have made any answer to it.

C. Bas. How the devil can I, if you won't hear me!

Moth. What, hear you talk of another woman!

C. Bas. O lud, O lud! I tell you, I'll make her fortune.—'Ounds! I'll marry her.

Moth. A likely matter! if you would not do it when she was a maid, your stomach is not so sharp set now, I presume.

C. Bas. Heyday! why, your head begins to turn, my dear; the devil! you did not think I proposed to marry her myself!

Moth. If you don't, who the devil do you think will marry her?

C. Bas. Why, a fool—

Moth. Humph; there may be sense in that—

C. Bas. Very good—One for t'other, then; if I can help her to a husband, why should not you come into my scheme of helping me to a wife?

Moth. Your pardon, Sir; ay, ay! in an honourable affair, you know you may command me—but, pray, where is this blessed husband and wife to be had?

C. Bas. Now, have a little patience—You must know then, this country knight, and his lady, bring up, in the coach with them, their eldest son and a daughter,

34 The PROVOK'D HUSBAND; or, ACT II.

to teach them to——wash their faces, and turn their toes out.

Moth. Good!

C. Bas. The son is an unlick'd whelp, about sixteen, just taken from school; and begins to hanker after every wench in the family: the daughter, much of the same age, a pert, forward huffy, who having eight thousand pounds left her by an old doating grandmother, seems to have a devilish mind to be doing in her way too.

Moth. And your design is to put her into business for life?

C. Bas. Look you, in short, Mrs Motherly, we gentlemen, whose occasional chariots roll only upon the four aces, are liable, sometimes, you know, to have a wheel out of order; which, I confess, is so much my case at present, that my dapple greys are reduc'd to a pair of ambling chairmen: now, if with your assistance I can whip up this young jade into a hackney-coach, I may chance, in a day or two after, to carry her in my own chariot, *en famille*, to an opera. Now what do you say to me?

Moth. Why, I shall not sleep——for thinking of it. But how will you prevent the family's smoaking your design?

C. Bas. By renewing my addresses to the mother.

Moth. And how will the daughter like that, think you?

C. Bas. Very well——whilst it covers her own affair.

Moth. That's true——it must do——but, as you say, one for t'other, Sir, I stick to that——if you don't do my niece's business with the son, I'll blow you with the daughter, depend upon't.

C. Bas. It's a bet——pay as we go, I tell you, and the five hundred shall be stak'd in a third hand.

Moth. That's honest.——But here comes my niece; shall we let her into the secret?

C. Bas. Time enough; may be I may touch upon it.

Act II.

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Enter MYRTILLA.

Moth. So, niece, are all the rooms done out, and the beds sheeted?

Myr. Yes, Madam, but Mr Moody tells us the lady always burns wax in her own chamber, and we have none in the house.

Moth. Odso! then I must beg your pardon, Count; this is a busy time, you know. [*Exit Mrs Motherly.*]

C. Bas. Myrtilla! how dost thou do, child?

Myr. As well as a losing gamester can.

C. Bas. Why, what have you lost?

Myr. What I shall never recover; and what's worse, you that have won it, don't seem to be much the better for't.

C. Bas. Why, child, dost thou ever see any body over-joyed for winning a deep stake, six months after 'tis over?

Myr. Would I had never played for it!

C. Bas. Pshaw! hang these melancholy thoughts! we may be friends still.

Myr. Dull ones.

C. Bas. Useful ones perhaps——suppose I should help thee to a good husband?

Myr. I suppose you'll think any one good enough, that will take me off o' your hands.

C. Bas. What do you think of the young country squire, the heir of the family that's coming to lodge here?

Myr. How should I know what to think of him?

C. Bas. Nay, I only give you the hint, child; it may be worth your while, at least, to look about you——Hark! what bustle's that without?

Enter Mrs MOTHERLY in haste.

Moth. Sir! Sir! the gentleman's coach is at the door! they are all come!

C. Bas. What, already?

Moth. They are just getting out!——won't you step

36 The PROVOK'D HUSBAND; or, ACT II.

and lead in my lady? Do you be in the way, niece; I must run and receive them. [*Exit Mrs Motherly.*]

C. Bas. And think of what I told you. [*Exit Count.*]

Myr. Ay, ay! you have left me enough to think of as long as I live—a faithless fellow! I am sure I have been true to him; and for that only reason, he wants to be rid of me: but while women are weak, men will be rogues.

Mrs MOTHERLY returns, shewing in Lady WRONG-HEAD, led by Count Basset.

Moth. If your Ladyship pleases to walk into this parlour, Madam, only for the present, 'till your servants have got all your things in.

La Wrong. Well, dear Sir, this is so infinitely obliging!—I protest it gives me pain tho', to turn you out of your lodging thus!

C. Bas. No trouble in the least, Madam; we single fellows are soon moved; besides, Mrs Motherly's my old acquaintance, and I could not be her hindrance.

Moth. The Count is so well bred, Madam, I dare say he would do a great deal more, to accommodate your Ladyship.

La. Wrong. O dear Madam!—A good well-bred sort of a woman. [*Apart to the Count.*]

C. Bas. O Madam, she is very much among people of quality, she is seldom without them in her house.

La. Wrong. Are there a good many people of quality in this street, Mrs Motherly?

Moth. Now your Ladyship is here, Madam, I don't believe there is a house without them.

La. Wrong. I am mighty glad of that: for really I think people of quality should always live among one another.

C. Bas. 'Tis what one would chuse, indeed, Madam.

La. Wrong. Bless me! but where are the children all this while?

Moth. Sir Francis, Madam, I believe, is taking care of them.

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ACT II. A JOURNEY to LONDON. 37

Sir Fran. within.] John Moody! stay you by the coach, and see all our things out—Come, children.

Moth. Here they are, Madam.

Enter Sir FRANCIS, Squire RICHARD, and Miss JENNY.

Sir Fran. Well, Count, I mun say it, this was koynd, indeed!

C. Bas. Sir Francis! give me leave to bid you welcome to London.

Sir Fran. Pshah! how dost do, mon?—Waunds, I'm glad to see thee! A good sort of a house this!

C. Bas. Is not that Master Richard?

Sir Fran. Ey, ey! that's young hopeful—why dost not baw, Dick?

Sq. Rich. So I do, feyther.

C. Bas. Sir, I am glad to see you—I protest Mrs Jane is grown so, I should not have known her.

Sir Fran. Come forward, Jenny.

Jenny. Sure, Papa, do you think I don't know how to behave myself?

C. Bas. If I have permission to approach her, Sir Francis.

Jenny. Lord, Sir, I'm in such a frightful pickle—

[*Salute.*

C. Bas. Every drefs that's proper must become you, Madam.—You have been a long journey.

Jen. I hope you will see me in a better, to-morrow, Sir

[*Lady Wrong. whispers Mrs Moth. pointing to Myr.*

Moth. Only a niece of mine, Madam, that lives with me: she will be proud to give your Ladyship any assistance in her power.

La. Wrong. A pretty sort of a young woman—you two must be acquainted.

Jen. O, Mamma! I am never strange in a strange place.

[*Salutes Myrilla.*

Myr. You do me a great deal of honour, Madam—Madam, your Ladyship's welcome to London.

en. Mamma, I like her prodigiously! she call'd me my ladyship.

38 The PROVOK'D HUSBAND; or, A&H.

Sq. Rich. Pray, mother, mayn't I be acquainted with her too?

La. Wrong. You! you clown! stay 'till you learn a little more breeding first.

Sir Fran. Od's heart! my Lady Wronghead! why do you balk the lad? how should he ever learn breeding, if he does not put himself forward?

Sq. Rich. Why, ay, Feyther, does mother think 'at I'd be uncivil to her?

Myr. Master has so much good humour, Madam, he would soon gain upon any body. [*Heciffes Myr.*]

Sq. Rich. Lo' you there, Mother: and you would but be quiet, she and I should do well enough.

La. Wrong. Why, how now, sirrah! boys must not be so familiar.

Sq. Rich. Why, an' I know no body, haw the murrain mun I pass my time here, in a strange place? Naw you and I, and sister, forsooth, sometimes, in an afternoon, may play at one and thirty bone-ace, purely.

Jen. Speak for yourself, Sir! D'ye think I play at such clownish games?

Sq. Rich. Why, and you woant yo' ma' let it alone; then she and I, mayhap, will have a bawt at all fours with you.

Sir Fran. Noa, noa, Dick, that won't do neither; you mun learn to make one at ombre here, child.

Myr. If master pleases, I'll shew it him.

Sq. Rich. What! the Humber! hoy day! why, does our river run to this tawn, feather?

Sir Fran. Pooh! you silly tony! ombre is a game at cards, that the better sort of people play three together at.

Sq. Rich. Nay, the more the merrier, I say; but sister is always so cross-grain'd—

Jen. Lord! this boy is enough to deaf people—and one has really been stuf up in a coach so long, that—Pray, Madam—could not I get a little powder for my hair?

Myr. If you please to come along with me, Madam.

[*Exeunt Myr. and Jen.*]

ACT II. A JOURNEY to LONDON. 39

Sq. Rich. What, has sister ta'en her away naw? mels, I'll go and have a little game with 'em.

[*Exit after them.*]

La. Wrong. Well, Count, I hope you won't so far change your lodgings, but you will come, and be at home here sometimes?

Sir Fran. Ay, ay! pr'ythee come and take a bit of mutton with us, naw and tan, when thouh't nawght to do.

C. Bas. Well, Sir Francis, you shall find I'll make but very little ceremony.

Sir Fran. Why ay naw, that's hearty!

Moth. Will your Ladyship please to refresh yourself with a dish of tea after your fatigue? I think I have pretty good.

La. Wrong. If you please, Mrs Motherly; but I believe we had best have it above stairs.

Moth. Very well, Madam: it shall be ready immediately.

[*Exit Mrs Motherly.*]

La. Wrong. Won't you walk up, Sir?

Sir Fran. Moody!

C. Bas. Shan't we stay for Sir Francis, Madam?

La. Wrong. Lard! don't mind him; he will come if he likes it.

Sir Fran. Ay, ay! ne'er heed me—I ha' things to look after.

[*Excunt Lady Wrong. and Count Bas.*]

Enter JOHN MOODY.

J. Moody. Did your Worship want muh?

Sir Fran. Ay; is the coach clear'd, and all our things in?

J. Moody. Aw but a few band-boxes, and the nook that's left o' the goose poy—But a plague on him, th' monkey has gin us the slip, I think—I suppose he's goon to see his relations; for here looks to be a power of 'um in this tawn—but heavy Ralph is skawer'd after him.

Sir Fran. Why, let him go to the devil! no matter, and the hawnds had had him a month agoe—but I wish the coach and horses were got safe to the inn!

40 The PROVOK'D HUSBAND; or, ACT II.

This is a sharp tawn, we mun look about us here, John; therefore I would have you go along with Roger, and see that nobody runs away with them before they get to the stable.

J. Moody. Alas-a-day, Sir, I believe our awld cattle won't yeasily be run away with to-night—but howsomdever, we'll ta' the best care we can of 'um, poor sawls.

Sir Fran. Well, well, make haste then—

[*Moody goes out, and returns.*]

J. Moody. Ods flesh! here's Mr Manly come to wait! upo' your Worship!

Sir Fran. Where is he?

J. Moody. Just coming in at threshold.

Sir Fran. Then goa about your business. [*Ex. Moody.*]

Enter MANLY.

Cousin Manly! Sir, I am your very humble servant.

Man. I heard you were come, Sir Francis—and—

Sir Fran. Oddheart! this was so kindly done of you naw.

Man. I wish you may think it so, Cousin! for I confess, I should have been better pleas'd to have seen you in any other place.

Sir Fran. How soa, Sir?

Man. Nay, 'tis for your own sake: I'm not concern'd.

Sir Fran. Look you, Cousin! tho' I know you wish me well, yet I don't question I shall give you such weighty reasons for what I have done, that you will say, Sir, this is the wisest journey that ever I made in my life.

Man. I think it ought to be, Cousin; for I believe you will find it the most expensive one—your election did not cost you a trifle, I suppose.

Sir Fran. Why ay, it's true! That—that did lick a little; but if a man's wife, (and I han't fawn'd yet that I'm a fool), there are ways, Cousin, to lick one's self whole again.

Man. Nay, if you have that secret—

ACT II. A JOURNEY to LONDON. 41

Sir Fran. Don't you be fearful, Cousin—— you'll find that I know something.

Man. If it be any thing for your good, I should be glad to know it too.

Sir Fran. In short then, I have a friend in a corner, that has let me a little into what's what, at Westminster——that's one thing.

Man. Very well! but what good is that to do you?

Sir Fran. Why not me, as much as it does other folks?

Man. Other people, I doubt, have the advantage of different qualifications.

Sir Fran. Why, ay, there's it now! you'll say that I have lived all my days i' the country——what then——I'm o' the Quorum——I have been at sessions, and I have made speeches there; ay, and at vestry too——and mayhap they may find here,——that I have brought my tongue up to town with me! D'ye take me now?

Man. If I take your case right, Cousin, I am afraid the first occasion you will have for your eloquence here, will be, to shew that you have any right to make use of it at all.

Sir Fran. How d'ye mean?

Man. That Sir John Worthland has lodg'd a petition against you.

Sir Fran. Petition! why, ay, there let it ly——we'll find a way to deal with that. I warrant you!——why, you forget, Cousin, Sir John's o' the wrong side, mon!

Man. I doubt, Sir Francis, that will do you but little service; for in cases very notorious (which I take yours to be) there is such a thing as a short day, and dispatching them immediately.

Sir Fran. With all my heart! the sooner I send him home again, the better.

Man. And this is the scheme you have laid down, to repair your fortune?

Sir Fran. In one word, Cousin, I think it my duty. The Wrongheads have been a considerable family, even

42 The PROVOK'D HUSBAND; or, Act II.

since England was England; and since the world knows I have talents where-withal, they shan't say it's my fault, if I don't make as good a figure as any that ever were at the head on't.

Man. Nay, this project, as you have laid it, will come up to any thing your ancestors have done these five hundred years.

Sir Fran. And let me alone to work it: mayhap I hav'n't told you all neither——

Man. You astonish me! what, and is it full as practicable as what you have told me?

Sir Fran. Ay, thof I say it——every whit, Cousin; you'll find that I have more irons i' the fire than one; I doan't come of a fool's errand!

Man. Very well.

Sir Fran. In a word, my wife has got a friend at court, as well as myself, and her dowghter Jenny is naw pretty well grown up——

Man. aside.]——And what in the devil's name would he do with the dowdy?

Sir Fran. Naw, if I doan't lay in for a husband for her, mayhap, i' this tawn, she may be looking out for herself——

Man. Not unlikely.

Sir Fran.] Therefore I have some thoughts of getting her to be a maid of honour.

Man. aside.] Oh! he has taken my breath away! but I must hear him out——Pray, Sir Francis, do you think her education has yet qualified her for a court?

Sir Fran. Why, the girl is a little too mettlesome, it's true! but she's tongue enough: she woan't be dash'd! Then she shall learn to daunce forthwith, and that will soon teach her how to stond still, you know.

Man. Very well; but when she is thus accomplish'd, you must still wait for a vacancy.

Sir Fran. Why, I hope one has a good chance for that every day, Cousin! For, if I take it right, that's a post that folks are not more willing to get into, than they are to get out of. It's like an orange-tree, upon that account——it will bear blossoms, and fruit that's ready to drop, at the same time.

Man. Well, Sir, you best know how to make good your pretensions! But pray where is my lady, and my young cousins? I should be glad to see them too.

Sir Fran. She is but just taking a dish of tea with the Count and my landlady.—I'll call her down.

Man. No, if she's engag'd, I shall call again.

Sir Fran. Odlheart! but you mun see her naw, Cousin; what! the best friend I have in the world!—Here! sweetheart! [*To a servant without.*] prythee desire my lady and the gentleman to come down a bit; tell her here's Cousin Manly come to wait upon her.

Man. Pray, Sir, who may that gentleman be?

Sir Fran. You mun know him to be sure; why, it's Count Bassett.

Man. Oh! is it he?—Your family will be infinitely happy in his acquaintance.

Sir Fran. Troth, I think so too: he's the civilest man that ever I knew in my life—why, here he would go out of his own lodgings, at an hour's warning, purely to oblige my family. Wasn't that kind, naw?

Man. Extremely civil—the family is in admirable hands already!

Sir Fran. Then my lady likes him hugely—all the time of York races, she would never be without him.

Man. This was happy indeed! and a prudent man, you know, should always take care that his wife may have innocent company.

Sir Fran. Why ay, that's it! and I think there could not be such another.

Man. Why, truly, for her purpose, I think not.

Sir Fran. Only naw and tan, he—he stonds a leetle too much upon ceremony; that's his fault.

Man. O never fear! he'll mend that every day—Mercy on us! what a head he has!

Sir Fran. So! here they come!

Enter Lady WRONGHEAD, Count BASSET, and Mrs MOTHERLY.

La. Wrong. Cousin Manly! this is infinitely obliging! I am extremely glad to see you.

44 The PROVOK'D HUSBAND; or, Act II.

Man. Your most obedient servant, Madam; I am glad to see your Ladyship look so well, after your journey.

La. Wrong. Why, really, coming to London is apt to put a little more life in one's looks.

Man. Yet the way of living here, is very apt to deaden the complexion—and give me leave to tell you, as a friend, Madam, you are come to the worst place in the world, for a good woman to grow better in.

La. Wrong. Lord, Cousin! how should people ever make any figure in life, that are always moap'd up in the country?

C. Basf. Your Ladyship certainly takes the thing in a quite right light, Madam: Mr Manly, your humble servant—a, hem.

Man. Familiar puppy! [*Aside.*] Sir, your most obedient—I must be civil to the rascal, to cover my suspicion of him. [*Aside.*]

C. Basf. Was you at White's this morning, Sir?

Man. Yes, Sir, I just call'd in.

C. Basf. Pray—what—was there any thing done there?

Man. Much as usual, Sir; the same daily carcases, and the same crows about them.

C. Basf. The Demoivre-baronet had a bloody tumble yesterday.

Man. I hope, Sir, you had your share of him.

C. Basf. No, faith! I came in when it was all over—I think I just made a couple of bets with him, took up a cool hundred, and so went to the King's Arms.

La. Wrong. What a genteel, easy manner he has!

[*Aside.*]

Man. A very hopeful acquaintance I have made here!

[*Aside.*]

Enter Squire RICHARD, with a wet brown paper on his face.

Sir Fran. How naw, Dick! what's the matter with thy forehead, lad?

Sq. Rich. I ha' gotten a knuck upon't.

Act II. A JOURNEY to LONDON. 45

La. Wrong. And how did you come by it, you heedless creature? How couldst thou run about so carelessly?

Sq. Rich. Why, I was but running after sister, and another young woman, into a little room just now; and so with that, they slapt the door full in my face, and gave me such a whurr here—I thought they had beaten my brains out! so I gut a dab of wet brow paper here, to swage it a while.

La. Wrong. They serv'd you right enough: will you never have done with your horse-play?

Sir Fran. Pooh, never heed it, lad! it will be well by to-morrow—The boy has a strong head.

Man. Yes, truly, his scull seems to be of a comfortable thickness. *[Aside.*

Sir Fran. Come, Dick, here's cousin Manly.—Sir, this is your god-son.

La. Wrong. Oh! here's my daughter too.

Enter Miss JENNY.

Sq. Rich. Honour'd Godfeyther, I crave leave to ask your blessing.

Man. Thou hast it, child—and if it will do thee any good, may it be to make thee, at least, as wise a man as thy father.

La. Wrong. Miss Jenny! don't you see your cousin, child?

Man. And as for thee, my pretty dear—*[Salutes her.]* may'tt thou be, at least, as good a woman as thy mother.

Jen. I wish I may ever be so handsome, Sir.

Man. Hah, Miss Pert! Now, that's a thought that seems to have been hatch'd in the girl on this side Highgate. *[Aside.*

Sir Fran. Her tongue is a little nimble, Sir.

La. Wrong. That's only from her country education, Sir Francis. You know she has been kept too long there—so I brought her to London, Sir, to learn a little more reserve and modesty.

Man. O, the best place in the world for it—every woman she meets will teach her something of it.

46 The PROVOK'D HUSBAND; or, Act II.

There's the good gentlewoman of the house, looks like a knowing person; even she perhaps will be so good as to shew her a little London behaviour.

Moth. Alas, Sir, Miss won't stand long in need of my instruction.

Man. That I dare say: what thou canst teach her, she will soon be mistress of. *[Aside.]*

Moth. If she does, Sir, they shall always be at her service.

La. Wrong. Very obliging, indeed, Mrs Motherly.

Sir Fran. Very kind and civil truly.——I think we are got into a mighty good hawse here.

Man. O yes, and very friendly company.

C. Bas. Humph! P'gad, I don't like his looks—he seems a little smoky.——I believe I had as good brush off——If I stay, I don't know but he may ask me some odd questions.

Man. Well, Sir, I believe you and I do but hinder the family.

C. Bas. It's very true, Sir—I was just thinking of going.——He don't care to leave me, I see: but it's no matter, we have time enough. *[Aside.]* And so, Ladies, without ceremony, your humble servant.

[Exit C. Bassett, and drops a letter.]

La. Wrong. Ha! what paper's this? Some billet-doux I'll lay my life, but this is no place to examine it.

[Puts it in her pocket.]

Sir Fran. Why in such haste, cousin?

Man. O, my Lady must have a great many affairs upon her hands, after such a journey.

La. Wrong. I believe, Sir, I shall not have much less every day, while I stay in this town, of one sort or other.

Man. Why, truly, ladies seldom want employment here, Madam.

Jen. And mamma did not come to it to be idle, Sir.

Man. Nor you neither, I dare say, my young mistress.

Jen. I hope not, Sir.

Man. Ha! Miss Mettle!——Where are you going, Sir?

Act II

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A& II. A JOURNEY to LONDON. 47

Sir Fran. Only to see you to the door, Sir.

Man. Oh, Sir Francis, I love to come and go, without ceremony.

Sir Fran. Nay, Sir, I must do as you will have me—your humble servant. [Exit Manly.]

Jen. This cousin Manly, Papa, seems to be but of an odd sort of a crusty humour—I don't like him half so well as the Count.

Sir Fran. Pooh! that's another thing, child—Cousin is a little proud indeed! but however you must always be civil to him, for he has a deal of money; and nobody knows who he may give it to.

La. Wrong. Pshaw! a fig for his money, you have so many projects of late about money, since you are a parliament-man: what! we must make ourselves slaves to his impertinent humours, eight or ten years, perhaps, in hopes to be his heirs, and then he will be just old enough to marry his maid?

Moth. Nay, for that matter, Madam, the town says he is going to be married already.

Sir Fran. Who? Cousin Manly?

La. Wrong. To whom, pray?

Moth. Why, is it possible your Ladyship should know nothing of it!—to my Lord Townly's sister, Lady Grace.

La. Wrong. Lady Grace!

Moth. Dear Madam, it has been in the newspapers!

La. Wrong. I don't like that neither.

Sir Fran. Naw, I do; for then it's likely it mayn't be true.

La. Wrong. aside.] If it is not too far gone, at least, it may be worth one's while to throw a rub in his way.

Sq. Rich. Pray, Feyther, haw lung will it be to supper?

Sir Fran. Odso! that's true; step to the cook, lad, and ask what she can get us.

Moth. If you please, Sir, I'll order one of my maids to shew her where she may have any thing you have a mind to.

Sir Fran. Thank you kindly, Mrs Motherly.

248 The PROVOK'D HUSBAND; or, Act II.

Sq. Rich. Ods-flesh! what, is not it? the hawse yet
— I shall be famish'd—but, hawld! I'll go and ask
Doll, an there's none o' the goose poy left.

Sir Fran. Do so, and dost hear, Dick—see if
there's e'er a bottle o' th' strong beer that came i' th'
coach with us—if there be, clap a toast in it, and
bring it up.

Sq. Rich. With a little nutmeg and sugar, shawn't I,
feyther?

Sir Fran. Ay, ay! as thee and I always drink it for
breakfast—Go thy ways!—and I'll fill a pipe i' th'
mean while. [*Takes one from a pocket-case, and fills it.*

La. Wrong. This boy is always thinking of his belly!
[*Exit Sq. Richard.*

Sir Fran. Why, my dear, you may allow him to be
a little hungry after his journey.

La. Wrong. Nay, ev'n breed him your own way.—
He has been cramming in or out of the coach all this
day, I am sure—I with my poor girl could eat a quarter
as much.

Fen. O, as for that, I could eat a great deal more,
mamma; but then, mayhap, I should grow coarse, like
him, and spoil my shape.

La. Wrong. Ay, so thou wouldst, my dear.

Enter Squire RICHARD, with a full tankard.

Sq. Rich. Here, Feyther, I ha' brougnt it—it's
well I went as I did; for our Doll had just bak'd a
toast, and was going to drink it herself.

Sir Fran. Why, then, here's to thee, Dick. [*Drinks.*

Sq. Rich. Thonk yow, Feyther.

La. Wrong. Lord, Sir Francis! I wonder you can en-
courage the boy to swill so much of that lubberly liquor
— it's enough to make him quite stupid.

Sq. Rich. Why, it never hurts me, Mother; and I
sleep like a hawnd after it. [*Drinks.*

Sir Fran. I am sure I ha' drunk it these thirty years;
and by your leave, Madam, I don't know that I want
wit. Ha, ha!

Fen. But you might have had a great deal more, Pa-
pa, if you would have been govern'd by my mother.

Sir Fran. Daughter, he that is govern'd by his wife, has no wit at all.

Jen. Then I hope I shall marry a fool, Sir; for I love to govern dearly.

Sir Fran. You are too pert, child; it don't do well in a young woman.

La. Wrong. Pray, Sir Francis, don't snub her; she has a fine growing spirit, and if you check her so, you will make her as dull as her brother there.

Sq. Rich. [after a long draught.] Indeed, mother, I think my sister is too forward.

Jen. You! you think I'm too forward! sure, brother Mud, your head's too heavy to think of any thing but your belly.

La. Wrong. Well said, Miss! he's none of your master, tho' he is your elder brother.

Sq. Rich. No, nor she shawn't be my mistress, while she's younger sister.

Sir Fran. Well said, Dick! shew 'em that stawt liquor makes a stawt heart, lad!

Sq. Rich. So I will; and I'll drink ageen, for all her.

[Drinks.]

Enter JOHN MOODY.

Sir Fran. So, John! how are the horses?

J. Moody. Troth, Sir, I ha' noa good opinion o' this town, it's made up o' mischief, I think!

Sir Fran. What's the matter naw?

J. Moody. Why, I'll tell your Worship—before we were gotten to th' street end, with the coach, here, a great luggerheaded cart, with wheels as thick as a brick wall, laid hawld on't, and has poo'd it aw to bits; crack, went the perch! down goes the coach! and whang says the glasse, all to shivers! Marcy upon us, and this be London! would we were aw weel in the country ageen!

Jen. What have you to do, to with us all in the country again, Mr Lubber? I hope we shall not go in to the country again these seven years, Mamma; let twenty coaches be pull'd to pieces.

50 The PROVOK'D HUSBAND; or, Act II.

Sir Fran. Hold your tongue, Jenny. — Was Roger in no fault in all this?

J. Moody. Noa, Sir, nor I, noather; Are not yow asheam'd, says Roger to the carter, to do such an unkind thing by strangers? Noa, says he, you bumkin. Sir, he did the thing on very purpose! and so the folks said that stood by — Very well, says Roger, yow shall see what our meyster will say to ye! Your meyster, says he, your meyster may kiss my — and so he clapt his hand just there, and like your Worship. Flesh! I thought they had better breeding in this tawne!

Sir Fran. I'll teach this rascal some, I'll warrant him! Odsbud! if I take him in hand, I'll play the devil with him.

Sq. Rich. Ay do, Feyther; have him before the parliament.

Sir Fran. Odsbud! and so I will. — I will make him know who I am! Where does he live?

J. Moody. I believe in London, Sir.

Sir Fran. What's the rascal's name?

J. Moody. I think I heard somebody call him Dick.

Sq. Rich. What, my name!

Sir Fran. Where did he go?

J. Moody. Sir, he went home.

Sir Fran. Where's that?

J. Moody. By my troth, Sir, I doan't know! I heard him say he would cross the same street again to-morrow; and if we had a mind to stand in his way, he wou'd pool us over and over again.

Sir Fran. Will he so? odszooks! get me a constable.

La. Wrong. Pooh! get you a good supper. Come, Sir Francis, don't put yourself in a heat for what can't be help'd. Accidents will happen to people that travel abroad to see the world. — For my part, I think it's a mercy it was not overturn'd before we were all out on't.

Sir Fran. Why, ay, that's true again, my dear.

La. Wrong. Therefore, see to-morrow if we can buy one at second-hand, for present use; so bespeak a new one, and then all's easy.

Act II. A JOURNEY to LONDON. 11

J. Moody. Why, troth, Sir, I doan't think this could have held you above a day longer.

Sir Fran. D'ye think so, John?

J. Moody. Why, you ha' had it, ever since your Worship were high-sheriff.

Sir Fran. Why then, go and see what Doll has got us for supper—and come, and get off my boots.

[Exit Sir Fran.]

La. Wrong. In the mean time, Miss, do you step to Handy, and bid her get me some fresh night-clothes.

[Exit La. Wrong.]

Jen. Yes, Mamma, and some for myself too.

[Exit Jenny.]

Sq. Rich. Odsflesh! and what mun I do all alone?

I'll e'en seek out where t'other pretty miss is,

And she and I'll go play at cards for kisses. [Exit.]

ACT III. SCENE I.

SCENE, *The Lord TOWNLY's House.*

Enter Lord TOWNLY, a SERVANT attending.

Lord TOWNLY.

WHO's there!

Serv. My Lord?

L. Town. Bid them get dianer.—*Lady Grace,* your servant.

Enter Lady GRACE.

La. Grace. What! is the house up already? My Lady is not dress'd yet!

L. Town. No matter—it's three o'clock—she may break my rest, but she shall not alter my hours.

La. Grace. Nay, you need not fear that now, for she dines abroad.

L. Town. That, I suppose, is only an excuse for her not being ready yet.

52 The PROVOK'D HUSBAND; or, Act III.

La. Grace. No, upon my word, she is engaged in company.

L. Town. Where, pray?

La. Grace. At my Lady Revel's; and you know they never dine till supper-time.

L. Town. No, truly—she is one of those orderly ladies, who never let the sun shine upon any of their vices.—But, pr'ythee, sister, what humour is she in to-day?

La. Grace. O! in tip-top spirits, I can assure you;—she won a good deal last night.

L. Town. I know no difference between her winning or losing, while she continues her course of life.

La. Grace. However, she is better in good humour, than bad.

L. Town. Much alike: when she is in good humour, other people only are the better for it: when in a very ill humour, then, indeed, I seldom fail to have my share of her.

La. Grace. Well, we won't talk of that now—Does any body dine here?

L. Town. Manly promis'd me.—By the way, Madam, what do you think of his last conversation?

La. Grace.—I am a little at a stand about it.

L. Town. How so?

La. Grace. Why—I don't know how he can ever have any thoughts of me, that could lay down such severe rules upon wives, in my hearing.

L. Town. Did you think his rules unreasonable?

La. Grace. I can't say I did: but he might have had a little more complaisance before me, at least.

L. Town. Complaisance is only a proof of good breeding: but his plainness was a certain proof of his honesty; nay, of his good opinion of you: for he would never have open'd himself so freely, but in confidence that your good sense could not be disobligh'd at it.

La. Grace. My good opinion of him, brother, has hitherto been guided by yours: but I have receiv'd a letter this morning that shews him a very different map from what I thought him.

Act III. A JOURNEY to LONDON: T 53

L. Town. A letter from whom?

La. Grace. That I don't know, but there it is.

[Gives a letter.]

L. Town. Pray let's see. [Reads.]

The inclos'd, Madam, fell accidentally into my hands; if it no way concerns you, you will only have the trouble of reading this from your sincere friend and humble servant, Unknown, &c.

La. Grace. And this was the inclos'd. [Giving another.]

L. Town. [Reads.] To Charles Manly, Esq;

Your manner of living with me of late, convinces me, that I now grow as painful to you, as to myself: but however, though you can love me no longer, I hope you will not let me live worse than I did, before I left an honest income, for the vain hopes of being ever yours.

MYRTILLA DUPE.

P. S. 'Tis above four months since I receiv'd a shilling from you.

La. Grace. What think you now?

L. Town. I am considering—

La. Grace. You see it's directed to him—

L. Town. That's true! but the postscript seems to be a reproach that I think he is not capable of deserving.

La. Grace. But who could have concern enough to send it to me?

L. Town. I have observed that these sort of letters from unknown friends, generally come from secret enemies.

La. Grace. What would you have me do in it?

L. Town. What I think you ought to do—fairly shew it him, and say I advis'd you to it.

La. Grace. Will not that have a very odd look, from me?

L. Town. Not at all, if you use my name in it. If he is innocent, his impatience to appear so, will discover his regard to you: if he is guilty, it will be your best way of preventing his addresses.

La. Grace. But what pretence have I to put him out of countenance?

L. Town. I can't think there's any fear of that.

54 The PROVOK'D HUSBAND; or, ACT III.

La. Grace. Pray, what is it you do think then?

L. Town. Why certainly, that it's much more probable, this letter may be all an artifice, than that he is in the least concern'd in it——

Enter a SERVANT.

Serv. Mr Manly, my Lord.

L. Town. Do you receive him; while I step a minute in to my Lady. *[Exit Lord Townly.]*

Enter Mr MANLY.

Man. Madam, your most obedient; they told me, my Lord was here.

La. Grace. He will be here presently: he is but just gone in to my sister.

Man. So! then my Lady dines with us.

La. Grace. No; she is engag'd.

Man. I hope you are not of her party, Madam?

La. Grace. Not till after dinner.

Man. And pray how may she have dispos'd of the rest of the day?

La. Grace. Much as usual! she has visits 'till about eight; after that, 'till Court time, she is to be at Quadrille, at Mrs Idle's: after the drawing room, she takes a short supper with my Lady Moonlight. And from thence, they go together to my Lord Noble's Assembly.

Man. And are you to do all this with her, Madam?

La. Grace. Only a few of the visits: I would indeed have drawn her to the play; but I doubt we have so much upon our hands, that it will not be practicable.

Man. But how can you forbear all the rest of it?

La. Grace. There's no great merit in forbearing, what one is not charm'd with.

Man. And yet I have found that very difficult in my time.

La. Grace. How do you mean?

Man. Why, I have pass'd a great deal of my life in the hurry of the ladies, though I was generally better pleas'd when I was at quiet without 'em.

La. Grace. What induc'd you, then, to be with them?

Man. Idleness, and the fashion.

La. Grace. No mistresses in the case?

Man. To speak honestly—Yes—being often in the Toyshop, there was no forbearing the bawbles.

La. Grace. And of course, I suppose sometimes you were tempted to pay for them, twice as much as they were worth.

Man. Why really, where fancy only makes the choice, Madam, no wonder if we are generally bubbled, in those sort of bargains, which I confess has been often my case: for I had constantly some coquette, or other, upon my hands, whom I could love perhaps just enough to put it in her power to plague me.

La. Grace. And that's a power, I doubt, commonly made use of.

Man. The amours of a coquette, Madam, seldom have any other view! I look upon them, and prudes, to be nuisances, just alike; tho' they seem very different: the first are always plaguing the men; and the other are always abusing the women.

La. Grace. And yet both of them do it for the same vain ends; to establish a false character of being virtuous.

Man. Of being chaste, they mean; for they know no other virtue: and, upon the credit of that, they traffic in every thing else that's vicious: they (even against nature) keep their chastity, only because they find they have more power to do mischief with it than they could possibly put in practice without it.

La. Grace. Hold! Mr Manly: I am afraid this severe opinion of the sex, is owing to the ill choice you have made of your mistresses.

Man. In a great measure, it may be so; but, Madam, if both these characters are so odious, how vastly valuable is that woman, who has attain'd all they aim at, without the aid of the folly or vice of either?

La. Grace. I believe those sort of women to be as scarce, Sir, as the men that believe there are any such; or that, allowing such, have virtue enough to deserve them.

Man. I believe your conversation grows terribly critical.

56 The PROVOK'D HUSBAND; or, Act III.

Man. That *could* deserve them, then—had been a more favourable reflexion!

La. Grace. Nay, I speak only from my little experience: for (I'll be free with you, Mr Manly)—I don't know a man in the world, that, in appearance, might better pretend to a woman of the first merit, than yourself: and yet I have a reason, in my hand, here, to think you have your failings.

Man. I have infinite, Madam; but I am sure, the want of an implicit respect for you, is not among the number—pray what is in your hand, Madam?

La. Grace. Nay, Sir, I have no title to it; for the direction is to you.

Man. To me! I don't remember the hand—

[*Reads to himself.*]

La. Grace. I can't perceive any change of guilt in him! and his surprise seems natural! [*Aside.*]
Give me leave to tell you one thing by the way, Mr Manly; that I should never have shewn you this, but that my brother enjoin'd me to it.

Man. I take that to proceed from my Lord's good opinion of me, Madam.

La. Grace. I hope, at least, it will stand as an excuse for my taking this liberty.

Man. I never yet saw you do any thing, Madam; that wanted an excuse; and, I hope, you will not give me an instance to the contrary, by refusing the favour I am going to ask you.

La. Grace. I don't believe I shall refuse any, that you think proper to ask.

Man. Only this, Madam, to indulge me so far, as to let me know how this letter came into your hands.

La. Grace. Inclos'd to me in this, without a name.

Man. If there be no secret in the contents, Madam—

La. Grace. Why—there is an impertinent insinuation in it: but as I know your good sense will think it so too, I will venture to trust you.

Man. You'll oblige me, Madam.

[*He takes the other letter and reads.*]

La. Grace. [*Aside.*] Now am I in the oddest situation! methinks our conversation grows terribly critical!

this must produce something: — O! lud! would it were over!

Man. Now, Madam, I begin to have some light into the poor project that is at the bottom of all this.

La. Grace. I have no notion of what could be proposed by it!

Man. A little patience, Madam—First, as to the insinuation you mention—

La. Grace. O! what is he going to say now! [*Aside.*]

Man. Tho' my intimacy with my Lord may have allow'd my visits to have been very frequent here of late; yet, in such a talking town as this, you must not wonder, if a great many of those visits are plac'd to your account: and this taken for granted, I suppose has been told to my Lady Wronghead, as a piece of news, since her arrival, not improbably without many more imaginary circumstances.

La. Grace. My Lady Wronghead!

Man. Ay, Madam, for I am positive this is her hand!

La. Grace. What view could she have in writing it?

Man. To interrupt any treaty of marriage, she may have heard I am engaged in: because, if I die without heirs, her family expects that some part of my estate may return to them again. But, I hope, she is so far mistaken, that if this letter has given you the least uneasiness, — I shall think that the happiest moment of my life.

La. Grace. That does not carry your usual complaisance, Mr Manly.

Man. Yes, Madam, because I am sure I can convince you of my innocence.

La. Grace. I am sure I have no right to enquire into it.

Man. Suppose you may not, Madam; yet you may very innocently have so much curiosity.

La. Grace. With what an artful gentleness he steals into my opinion! [*Aside.*] Well, Sir, I won't pretend to have so little of the woman in me, as to want curiosity—But pray, do you suppose then, this Myrtila is a real, or a fictitious name?

58 The PROVOK'D HUSBAND: or, Act III.

Man. Now I recollect, Madam, there is a young woman, in the house where my Lady Wronghead lodges, that I heard somebody call Myrtilla: this letter may be written by her—but how it came directed to me, I confess, is a mystery that, before I ever presume to see your Ladyship again, I think myself oblig'd in honour to find out. [Going.]

La. Grace. Mr Manly—you are not going?

Man. 'Tis but to the next street, Madam; I shall be back in ten minutes.

La. Grace. Nay, but dinner's just coming up.

Man. Madam, I can neither eat, nor rest, till I see an end of this affair.

La. Grace. But this is so odd! why should any silly curiosity of mine drive you away?

Man. Since you won't suffer it to be yours, Madam, then it shall be only to satisfy my own curiosity—

[Exit Manly.]

La. Grace. Well—and now, what am I to think of all this? Or suppose an indifferent person had heard every word we have said to one another, what would they have thought on't? Would it have been very absurd to conclude, he is seriously inclined to pass the rest of his life with me?—I hope not—for I am sure, the case is terribly clear on my side! and why may not I, without vanity, suppose my—unaccountable somewhat—has done as much execution upon him?—why—because he never told me so—nay, he has not so much as mentioned the word love, or ever said one civil thing to my person—well—but he has said a thousand to my good opinion, and has certainly got it—had he spoke first to my person, he had paid a very ill compliment to my understanding—I should have thought him impertinent, and never have troubled my head about him; but as he has managed the matter, at least I am sure of one thing; that let his thoughts be what they will, I shall never trouble my head about any other man, as long as I live.

Enter Mrs TRUSTY.

Well, Mrs Trusty, is my sister dress'd yet?

Trusty. Yes, Madam; but my lord has been courting her so, I think, 'till they are both out of humour.

La. Grace. How so?

Trusty. Why, it begun, Madam, with his lordship's desiring her ladyship to dine at home to day—upon which my lady said she could not be ready; upon that my lord order'd them to stay the dinner, and then my lady order'd the coach; then my lord took her short, and said, he had order'd the coachman to set up: then my lady made him a great curtsy, and said, she would wait till his lordship's horses had din'd, and was mighty pleasant: but for fear of the worst, Madam, she whisper'd me—to get her chair ready. [*Exit Trusty.*]

La. Grace. O, here they come; and, by their looks, seem a little unfit for company. [*Exit Lady Grace.*]

Enter Lady TOWNLY, Lord TOWNLY following.

La. Town. Well! look you, my Lord; I can bear it no longer! nothing still but about my faults, my faults! an agreeable subject truly!

L. Town. Why, Madam, if you won't hear of them, how can I ever hope to see you mend them?

La. Town. Why, I don't intend to mend them—I can't mend them—you know I have try'd to do it an hundred times, and—it hurts me so—I can't bear it!

L. Town. And I, Madam, can't bear this daily licentious abuse of your time and character.

La. Town. Abuse! astonishing! when the universe knows, I am never better company, than when I am doing what I have a mind to! But to see this world! that men can never get over that silly spirit of contradiction—why, but last Thursday now—there you wisely amended one of my faults, as you call them—you insisted upon my not going to the masquerade—and pray what was the consequence? was not I as cross as the devil all the night after? was not I forc'd to get company at home? and was it not almost three o'clock in the morning, before I was able to come to myself again? and then the fault is not mended neither, —for next time, I shall only have twice the incli-

60 The PROVOK'D HUSBAND; or, Act IV.

nation to go: so that all this mending, and mending, you see, is but darning an old ruffle, to make it worse than it was before.

L. Town. Well, the manner of womens living, of late, is insupportable; and one way or other—

La. Town. It's to be mended, I suppose! why, so it may; but then, my dear Lord, you must give one time—and when things are at worst, you know, they may mend themselves! ha, ha!

L. Town. Madam, I am not in a humour now to trifle.

La. Town. Why, then, my Lord, one word of fair argument—to talk with you your own way now—You complain of my late hours, and I of your early ones——so far are we even, you'll allow—but pray which gives us the best figure in the eye of the polite world? my active, spirited three in the morning, or your dull drowsy eleven at night? Now, I think, one has the air of a woman of quality, and t'other of a plodding mechanic, that goes to bed betimes, that he may rise early, to open his shop!—Faugh!

L. Town. Fy, fy, Madam! is this your way of reasoning? 'tis time to wake you then——'tis not your ill hours alone, that disturb me, but as often the ill company, that occasion those ill hours.

La. Town. Sure I don't understand you now, my Lord; what ill company do I keep?

L. Town. Why, at best, women that lose their money, and men that win it! Or, perhaps, men that are voluntary bubbles at one game, in hopes a lady will give them fair play at another. Then that unavoidable mixture with known rakes, conceal'd thieves, and sharpers in embroidery——or what, to me, is still more shocking, that herd of familiar chattering crop-eard coxcombs, who are so often like monkeys, there would be no knowing them asunder, but that their tails hang from their head, and the monkey's grows where it should do.

La. Town. And a husband must give eminent proof of his sense, that thinks their powder-puffs dangerous.

ACT III. A JOURNEY to LONDON. 61

L. Town. Their being fools, Madam, is not always the husband's security: or if it were, Fortune, sometimes, gives them advantages might make a thinking woman tremble.

La. Town. What do you mean?

L. Town. That women sometimes lose more than they are able to pay; and if a creditor be a little pressing, the lady may be reduc'd to try if, instead of gold, the gentleman will accept of a trinket.

La. Town. My Lord, you grow scurrilous; you'll make me hate you. I'll have you to know, I keep company with the politest people in town, and the assemblies I frequent are full of such.

L. Town. So are the churches—now and then.

La. Town. My friends frequent them too, as well as the assemblies.

L. Town. Yes, and would do it oftner, if a groom of the chambers there were allowed to furnish cards to the company.

La. Town. I see what you drive at all this while; you would lay an imputation on my fame, to cover your own avarice! I might take any pleasures, I find, that were not expensive.

L. Town. Have a care, Madam; don't let me think you only value your chastity, to make me reproachable for not indulging you in every thing else that's vicious. I, Madam, have a reputation too, to guard, that's dear to me, as yours—The follies of an ungovern'd wife may make the wisest man uneasy; but 'tis his own fault, if ever they make him contemptible.

La. Town. My Lord—you would make a woman mad!

L. Town. You'd make a man a fool.

La. Town. If Heaven has made you otherwise, that won't be in my power.

L. Town. Whatever may be in your inclination, Madam; I'll prevent you making me a beggar at least.

La. Town. A beggar! Croesus! I'm out of patience! I won't come home 'till four to-morrow morning.

62 The PROVOK'D HUSBAND; or, ACT III.

L. Town. That may be, Madam; but I'll order the doors to be lock'd at twelve.

La. Town. Then I won't come home till to-morrow night.

L. Town. Then, Madam;—you shall never come home again. *[Exit Lord Town.]*

La. Town. What does he mean! I never heard such a word from him in my life before! the man always us'd to have manners in his worst humours! there's something, that I don't see, at the bottom of all this—but his head's always upon some impracticable scheme or other, so I won't trouble mine any longer about him. Mr Manly, your servant.

Enter MANLY.

Man. I ask pardon for my intrusion, Madam; but I hope my business with my Lord will excuse it.

L. Town. I believe you'll find him in the next room, Sir.

Man. Will you give me leave, Madam?

La. Town. Sir—you have my leave, though you were a lady.

Man. aside.] What a well-bred age do we live in?

[Exit Manly.]

Enter Lady GRACE.

La. Town. O, my dear Lady Grace! how could you leave me so unmercifully alone all this while?

La. Grace. I thought my Lord had been with you.

La. Town. Why, yes—and therefore I wanted your relief; for he has been in such a flutter here—

La. Grace. Bless me! for what?

La. Town. Only our usual breakfast; we have each of us had our dish of matrimonial comfort this morning! we have been charming company!

La. Grace. I am mighty glad of it! sure it must be a vast happiness, when a man and a wife can give themselves the same turn of conversation!

La. Town. O, the prettiest thing in the world!

La. Grace. Now I should be afraid, that where two

ACT III. A JOURNEY TO LONDON. 103

people are every day together so, they must often be in want of something to talk upon.

La. Town. O my dear, you are the most mistaken in the world: married people have things to talk of, child, that never enter into the imagination of others.

La. Grace. Why, here's my Lord and I now, we have not been married above two short years, you know, and we have already eight or ten things constantly in bank, that whenever we want company, we can take up any one of them for two hours together, and the subject never the flatter; nay, if we have occasion for it, it will be as fresh next day too, as it was the first hour it entertain'd us.

La. Grace. Certainly that must be vastly pretty.

La. Town. O, there's no life like it: why, 't'other day, for example, when you din'd abroad; my Lord and I, after a pretty cheerful *repas à la mode* meal, sat us down by the fire-side, in an easy, indolent, pick-tooth way, for about a quarter of an hour, as if we had not thought of any other's being in the room.

at last, stretching himself, and yawning.

My dear, says he,

—aw— you came home very late last night.

I was but just turn'd of two, says I.

I was in bed

—aw— by eleven, says he: So you are every night,

says I.

Well, says he, I am amazed you can sit up

so late.

How can you be amaz'd, says I, at a thing

that happens so often?

—upon which we enter'd

into a conversation—

and though this is a point has

entertain'd us above fifty times already, we always find

so many pretty new things upon it, that I believe in

my soul it will last as long as we live.

La. Grace. But pray, in such sort of family dialogues

(though extremely well for passing the time) don't there

now and then enter some little witty sort of bitterness?

La. Town. O yes, which does not do amiss at all:

a smart repartee, with a zest of recrimination at the

head of it, makes the prettiest sherbet; ay, ay! if we

did not mix a little of the acid with it, a matrimonial

society would be so luscious, that nothing but an old

liquorish prude would be able to bear it.

64 THE PROVOK'D HUSBAND; or, ACT III.

La. Grace. Well, — certainly you have the most elegant taste —

La. Town. Though, to tell you the truth, my dear, I rather think we squeez'd a little too much lemon into it this bout; for it grew so sour at last, that — I think — I almost told him he was a fool — and he again — talk'd something oddly of — turning me out of doors.

La. Grace. O! have a care of that!

La. Town. Nay, if he should, I may thank my own wise father for that —

La. Grace. How so?

La. Town. Why — when my good lord first open'd his honourable trenches before me, my unaccountable paps, in whose hands I then was, gave me up at discretion.

La. Grace. How do you mean?

La. Town. He said, the wives of this age were come to that pass, that he would not desire even his own daughter should be trusted with pin-money; so that my whole train of separate inclinations are left entirely at the mercy of an husband's odd humours.

La. Grace. Why, that, indeed, is enough to make a woman of spirit look about her!

La. Town. Nay, but to be serious, my dear; what would you really have a woman do in my case?

La. Grace. Why — if I had a sober husband as you have, I would make myself the happiest wife in the world, by being as sober as he.

La. Town. O! you wicked thing! how can you teize one at this rate? when you know he is so very sober, that (except giving me money) there is not one thing in the world he can do to please me! And I at the same time, partly by nature, and partly, perhaps, by keeping the best company, do with my soul love almost every thing he hates! I doat upon assemblies! my heart bounds at a ball; and at an opera — I expire! then I love play to distraction! cards enchant me! and dice — put me out of my little wits! Dear, dear hazard! oh!

La. Grace. I wish you were as sober as I am.

ACT III. A JOURNEY TO LONDON. 63

what a flow of spirits it gives one! Do you never play at hazard, child?

La. Grace. Oh! never! I don't think it fits well upon women; there's something so masculine, so much the air of a rake in it! you see how it makes the men swear and curse! and when a woman is thrown into the same passion——why——

La. Town. That's very true; one is a little put to it, sometimes, not to make use of the same words to express it.

La. Grace. Well—and upon ill luck, pray what words are you really forc'd to make use of?

La. Town. Why, upon a very hard case, indeed, when a sad wrong word is rising, just to one's tongue's end, I give a great gulp—and swallow it.

La. Grace. Well—and is not that enough to make you forswear play, as long as you live?

La. Town. O yes! I have forsworn it.

La. Grace. Seriously?

La. Town. Solemnly! a thousand times; but then one is constantly forsworn.

La. Grace. And how can you answer that?

La. Town. My dear, what we say, when we are lovers, we look upon to be no more binding than a lover's oath, or a great man's promise. But I beg pardon, child; I should not lead you so far into the world; you are a prude, and design to live soberly.

La. Grace. Why, I confess, my nature and my education do, in a good degree, incline me that way.

La. Town. Well! how a woman of spirit (for you don't want that, child) can dream of living soberly, is to me inconceivable! for you will marry; I suppose.

La. Grace. I can't tell but I may.

La. Town. And won't you live in town?

La. Grace. Half the year, I should like it very well.

La. Town. My stars! and you would really live in London half the year to be sober in it?

La. Grace. Why not?

La. Town. Why can't you as well go, and be sober in the country?

66 The PROVOK'D HUSBAND; or, ADAM.

La. Grace. So I would.—'tween half year.

La. Town. And pray, what comfortable scheme of life would you form now, for your summer and winter sober entertainments?

La. Grace. A scheme that, I think, might very well content us.

La. Town. O! of all things let's hear it.

La. Grace. Why, in summer, I could pass my leisure hours in riding, in reading, walking by a canal, or sitting at the end of it under a great tree; in dressing, dining, chatting with an agreeable friend; perhaps, hearing a little music, taking a dish of tea, or a game of cards, soberly! managing my family, looking into its accounts, playing with my children, (if I had any), or in a thousand other innocent amusements—soberly! and possibly, by these means, I might induce my husband to be as sober as myself.

La. Town. Well, my dear, thou art an astonishing creature! For sure such primitive antediluvian notions of life, have not been in any head these thousand years—Under a great tree! o' my soul!—But I beg we may have the sober town-scheme too—for I am charm'd with the country one!

La. Grace. You shall, and I'll try to stick to my sobriety there too.

La. Town. Well, tho' I'm sure it will give me the vapours, I must hear it however.

La. Grace. Why then, for fear of your fainting, Madam, I will first so far come into the fashion, that I would never be dress'd out of it—but still it should be soberly; for I can't think it any disgrace to a woman of my private fortune, not to wear her lace as fine as the wedding-suit of a first duchess: tho' there is one extravagance I would venture to come up to.

La. Town. Ay, now for it.

La. Grace. I would every day be as clean as a bride.

La. Town. Why, the men say, that's a great step to be made one.—Well, now you are dress'd—pray, to what purpose?

La. Grace. I would visit—that is, my real friends;

ACT III. A JOURNEY TO LONDON. 67

but as little for form as possible.——I would go to court; sometimes to an assembly, nay, play at quadrille——soberly: I would see all the good plays, and, (because 'tis the fashion), now and then an opera——but I would not expire there, for fear I should never go again: and, lastly, I can't say, but for curiosity, if I lik'd my company, I might be drawn in once to a masquerade! And this, I think, is as far as any woman can go——soberly.

La. Town. Well! if it had not been for that last piece of sobriety, I was just going to call for some surfeit-water.

La. Grace. Why, don't you think, with the farther aid of breakfasting, dining, taking the air, supping, sleeping, not to say a word of devotion, the four and twenty hours might roll over in a tolerable manner?

La. Town. Tolerable? Deplorable! Why, child, all you propose, is but to endure life; now I want to enjoy it.——

Enter Mrs. TRUSTY.

Trusty. Madam, your Ladyship's chair is ready.

La. Town. Have the footmen their white flambeaux yet? For last night I was poison'd.

Trusty. Yes, Madam: there were some came in this morning. [Exit Trusty.]

La. Town. My dear, you will excuse me; but you know my time is so precious.——

La. Grace. That I beg I may not hinder your least enjoyment of it.

La. Town. You will call on me at Lady Revel's?

La. Grace. Certainly.

La. Town. But I am so afraid it will break into your sober scheme, my dear!

La. Grace. When it does, I will——soberly break from you.

La. Town. Why then, till we meet again, dear sister, I wish you all tolerable happiness. [Exit Lady Town.]

La. Grace. There she goes—dash! into her stream of pleasures! Poor woman! she is really a fine crea-

ture, and sometimes infinitely agreeable! nay, take her out of the madness of this town, rational in her notions, and easy to live with: but she is so borne down by this torrent of vanity in vogue, she thinks every hour of her life is lost, that she does not lead at the head of it. What it will end in, I tremble to imagine!——Had my brother, and Manly with him! I guess what they have been talking of——I shall hear it in my turn, I suppose; but it won't become me to be inquisitive. [Exit Lady Grace.]

Enter Lord TOWNLY, and MANLY.

L. Town. I did not think my Lady Wronghead had such a notable brain; tho' I can't say she was so very wise, in trusting this silly girl you call Myrtila, with the secret.

Man. No, my Lord, you mistake me; had the girl been in the secret, perhaps, I had never come at it myself.

L. Town. Why, I thought you said, the girl writ this letter to you, and that my Lady Wronghead sent it inclos'd to my sister?

Man. If you please to give me leave, my Lord——the fact is thus:—This inclos'd letter to Lady Grace was a real original one, written by this girl, to the Count we have been talking of: the Count drops it, and my Lady Wronghead finds it; then, only changing the cover, she seals it up as a letter of business, just written by herself, to me: and pretending to be in a hurry, gets this innocent girl to write the direction for her.

L. Town. Oh! then the girl did not know she was superscribing a billet-doux of her own to you?

Man. No, my Lord; for when I first question'd her about the direction, she own'd it immediately; but when I shew'd her that her letter to the Count was within it, and told her how it came into my hands, the poor creature was amaz'd, and thought herself betray'd both by the Count and my Lady——In short, upon this discovery, the girl and I grew so gracious, that she has

ACT III. A JOURNEY TO LONDON. T 69

let me into some transactions, in my Lady Wronghead's family, which, with my having a careful eye over them, may prevent the ruin of it.

L. Town. You are very generous, to be solicitous for a lady that has given you so much uneasiness.

Man. But I will be most unmercifully reveng'd of her; for I will do her the greatest friendship in the world—against her will.

L. Town. What an uncommon philosophy art thou master of, to make even thy malice a virtue!

Man. Yet, my Lord, I assure you, there is no one action of my life gives me more pleasure than your approbation of it.

L. Town. Dear Charles! my heart's impatient till thou art nearer to me; and as a proof that I have long wish'd thee so, while your daily conduct has chosen rather to deserve than ask my sister's favour, I have been as secretly industrious to make her sensible of your merit: and since, on this occasion, you have open'd your whole heart to me, 'tis now with equal pleasure, I assure you, we have both succeeded—the is as firmly yours—

Man. Impossible! you flatter me!

L. Town. I'm glad you think it flattery: but she herself shall prove it none: she dines with us alone; when the servants are withdrawn, I'll open a conversation, that shall excuse my leaving you together—O Charles! had I, like thee, been cautious in my choice, what melancholy hours had this heart avoided!

Man. No more of that, I beg, my Lord—

L. Town. But 'twill, at least, be some relief to my anxiety (however barren of content the state has been to me) to see so near a friend and sister happy in it: your harmony of life will be an instance how much the choice of temper is preferable to beauty.

While your soft hours in mutual kindness move,
You'll reach by Virtue what I lost by Love.

[Exit.]

70 THE PROVOK'D HUSBAND; or, ACT IV.

ACT IV. SCENE I.

SCENE, *Mrs. MOTHERLY's House.*

Enter Mrs. MOTHERLY, meeting MYRTILLA.

MOTHERLY. — blow

*S*O, niece! where is it possible you can have been these six hours?

Myr. O, Madam! I have such a terrible story to tell you.

Moth. A story! Ods my life! what have you done with the Count's note of five hundred pound I sent you about? is it safe? is it good? is it security?

Myr. Yes, yes, it is safe; but for its goodness—
Mercy on us! I have been in a fair way to be hang'd about it?

Moth. The dickens! has the rogue of a Count play'd us another trick then?

Myr. You shall hear, Madam: when I came to Mr. Cash, the banker's, and shewed him his note for five hundred pounds, payable to the Count, or order, in two months—he look'd earnestly upon it, and desired me to step into the inner room; while he examin'd his books—After I had staid about ten minutes, he came in to me—elaps to the door, and charges me with a constable for forgery.

Moth. Ah, poor soul! and how didst thou get off?

Myr. While I was ready to sink in this condition, I begg'd him to have a little patience, till I could send for Mr. Manly, whom he knew to be a gentleman of worth and honour, and who, I was sure, would convince him, whatever fraud might be in the note, that I was myself an innocent abus'd woman—and as good luck would have it, in less than half an hour, Mr. Manly came—so, without mincing the matter, I fairly told him upon what design the Count had lodg'd that note in your hands, and, in short, laid open the whole scheme he had drawn us into, to make our fortune.

ACT IV. A JOURNEY to LONDON. 71

Moth. The devil you did!

Myr. Why, how do you think it was possible I could any otherwise make Mr Manly my friend, to help me out of the scrape I was in? To conclude, he soon made Mr Cash easy; and sent away the constable; nay, farther, he promis'd me, if I would trust the note in his hands, he would take care it should be fully paid before it was due, and at the same time would give me an ample revenge upon the Count; so that all you have to consider now, Madam, is, whether you think yourself safer in the Count's hands, or Mr Manly's?

Moth. Nay, nay, child, there is no choice in the matter! Mr Manly may be a friend indeed, if any thing in our power can make him so.

Myr. Well, Madam, and now pray how stand matters at home here? What has the Count done with the ladies?

Moth. Why, every thing he has a mind to do; by this time, I suppose. He is in as high favour with Miss, as he is with my Lady.

Myr. Pray, where are the ladies?

Moth. Rattling abroad in their own coach, and the well-bred Count along with them: they have been scouring all the shops in town over, buying fine things, and new clothes, from morning to night; they have made one voyage already, and have brought home such a cargo of bawbles and trumpery.——Mercy on the poor man that's to pay for them!

Myr. Did not the young Squire go with them?

Moth. No, no; Miss said, truly he would but disgrace their party: so they even left him asleep by the kitchen fire.

Myr. Has not he asked after me all this while? for I had a sort of an assignation with him.

Moth. O yes! he has been in a bitter taking about it. At last his disappointment grew so uneasy, that he fairly fell a crying; so to quiet him, I sent one of the maids and John Mobdy abroad with him to show him—the lions, and the monument.

[Exit Myr.]

75 The PROVOK'D HUSBAND; or, Act IV.

Enter Sir FRANCIS WRONGHEAD.

Sir Fran. What! my wife and daughter abroad, say you?

Moth. O dear Sir, they have been mighty busy all the day long; they just came home to snap up a short dinner, and so went out again.

Sir Fran. Well, well, I shan't stay supper for 'em, I can tell 'em that; for ods-heart! I have had nothing in me but a toast and tankard, since morning.

Moth. I am afraid, Sir, these late parliament hours won't agree with you.

Sir Fran. Why, truly, Mrs Motherly, they don't do right with us country gentlemen: to lose one meal out of three, is a hard tax upon a good stomach.

Moth. It is so indeed, Sir.

Sir Fran. But, hawsomever, Mrs Motherly, when we consider, that what we suffer is for the good of our country—

Moth. Why truly, Sir, that is something.

Sir Fran. Oh! there's a great deal to be said for't—the good of one's country is above all things.—A true hearted Englishman thinks nothing too much for it.—I have heard of some honest gentlemen so very zealous, that for the good of their country—they would sometimes go to dinner at midnight.

Moth. O, the goodness of 'em! sure their country must have a vast esteem for them?

Sir Fran. So they have, Mrs Motherly; they are so respected when they come home to their boroughs, after a session, and so belov'd—that their country will come and dine with them every day in the week.

Moth. Dear me! what a fine thing 'tis to be so populous!

Sir Fran. It is a great comfort, indeed! and I can assure you, you are a good sensible woman, Mrs Motherly.

Moth. O dear Sir, your Honour's pleas'd to compliment.

Sir Fran. No, no, I see you know how to value people of consequence.

ACT IV. A JOURNEY to LONDON. 73

Moth. Good lack! here's company, Sir: will you give me leave to get you a little something till the ladies come home, Sir?

Sir Fran. Why, troth, I don't think it would be amiss.

Moth. It shall be done in a moment, Sir. [Exit.

Enter MANLY.

Man. Sir Francis, your servant.

Sir Fran. Cousin Manly!

Man. I am come to see how the family goes on here.

Sir Fran. Troth! all as busy as bees; I have been upon the wing ever since eight o'clock this morning.

Man. By your early hour, then, I suppose you have been making your court to some of the great men.

Sir Fran. Why, faith! you have hit it, Sir.—I was advis'd to lose no time; so I e'en went straight forward to one great man I had never seen in my life before.

Man. Right! that was doing business. — But who had you got to introduce you?

Sir Fran. Why, nobody—I remember'd I had heard a wife man say—My son, be bold—so troth! I introduc'd myself.

Man. As how, pray?

Sir Fran. Why, thus—Look ye—Please your Lordship, says I, I am Sir Francis Wronghead of Bumper-hall, and member of parliament for the borough of Guzzledown—Sir, your humble servant, says my Lord; thof I have not the honour to know your person, I have heard you are a very honest gentleman, and I am glad your borough has made choice of so worthy a representative. And so, says he, Sir Francis, have you any service to command me? Naw, Cousin! those last words, you may be sure, gave me no small encouragement. And thof I know, Sir, you have no extraordinary opinion of my parts, yet I believe, you won't say I mist it naw!

Man. Well, I hope I shall have no cause.

Sir Fran. So when I found him so courteous—

74 The PROVOK'D HUSBAND; or, Act IV.

My Lord, says I, I did not think to ha' troubled your Lordship with business upon my first visit; but since your Lordship is pleased not to stand upon ceremony — why truly, says I, I think now is as good as another time.

Man. Right! there you push'd him home.

Sir Fran. Ay, ay, I had a mind to let him see that I was none of your mealy-mouth'd ones.

Man. Very good!

Sir Fran. So, in short, my Lord, says I, I have a good estate — but — a — it's a little awt at elbows; and as I desire to serve my King, as well as my country, I shall be very willing to accept of a place at court.

Man. So! this was making short work on't.

Sir Fran. Pood! I shot him flying, cousin: some of your hawf-witted ones naw, would ha' humm'd and haw'd, and dangled a month or two after him, before they durst open their mouths about a place, and mayhap, not ha' got it at last neither.

Man. Oh! I'm glad you're so sure on't —

Sir Fran. You shall hear, Cousin — Sir Francis, says my Lord, pray what sort of a place may you ha' turn'd your thoughts upon? My Lord, says I, Beggars must not be chufers: but any place, says I, about a thousand a-year, will be well enough to be doing with till something better falls in — for I thought I would not look well to stand haggling with him at first.

Man. No, no, your business was to get footing any way.

Sir Fran. Right! there's it! Ay, Cousin, I see you know the world.

Man. Yes, yes, one sees more of it every day — Well, but what said my Lord to all this?

Sir Fran. Sir Francis, says he, I shall be glad to serve you any way that lyes in my power; so he gave me a squeeze by the hand, as much as to say, Give yourself no trouble — I'll do your business. With that he turn'd him abawt to somebody with a colour'd ribbon across here, that look'd, in my thoughts, as if he came for a place too.

Act IV

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ACT IV. A JOURNEY TO LONDON. 75

Man. Hadst thou, upon these hopes, you are to make your fortune!

Sir Fran. Why, do you think there's only doubt of it, Sir?

Man. Oh, no, I have not the least doubt about it—for just as you have done, I made my fortune ten years ago.

Sir Fran. Why, I never knew you had a place, Cousin.

Man. Nor I neither, upon my faith, Cousin. But you, perhaps, may have better fortune; for I suppose my Lord has heard of what importance you were in the debate to-day.——You have been since down at the house, I presume?

Sir Fran. O yes! I would not neglect the house for ever so much.

Man. Well, and pray what have they done there?

Sir Fran. Why, troth! I can't well tell you what they have done, but I can tell you what I did: and I think pretty well in the main; only I happen'd to make a little mistake at last, indeed.

Man. How was that?

Sir Fran. Why, they were all got there, into a sort of a puzzling debate, about the good of the nation—and I were always for that, you know—but, in short, the arguments were so long-winded o' both sides, that, waunds! I did not well understand 'um: haw! however, I was convinc'd, and so resolv'd to vote right, according to my conscience——so, when they came to put the question, as they call it,——I don't know how 'twas——but I doubt I cry'd Ay! when I should ha' cry'd No!

Man. How came that about?

Sir Fran. Why, by a mistake, as I tell you——for there was a good-humour'd sort of a gentleman, one Mr Tother-side I think they call him, that sat next me, as soon as I had cry'd Ay! gives me a hearty shake by the hand; Sir, says he, you are a man of honour, and a true Englishman! and I should be proud to be better acquainted with you——and so, with that, he takes me by the sleeve, along with the crowd into the lobby——

76 The PROVOK'D HUSBAND; or, Act IV.

so, I knew nowght—but ods flesh! I was got o' the wrung side the post—for I were told afterwards, I should have staid where I was.

Man. And so, if you had not quite made your fortune before, you have clench'd it now!—Ah! thou head of the Wrongheads. [*Aside.*]

Sir Fran. Odso! here's my Lady come home at last—I hope, Cousin, you will be so kind as to take a family supper with us?

Man. Another time, Sir Francis; but to night, I am engag'd!

Enter La. WRONGHEAD, Miss JENNY, and C. BASSET.

La. Wrong. Cousin! your servant; I hope you will pardon my rudeness; but we have really been in such a continual hurry here, that we have not had a leisure moment to return your last visit.

Man. O, Madam, I am a man of no ceremony; you see that has not hinder'd my coming again.

La. Wrong. You are infinitely obliging; but I'll redeem my credit with you.

Man. At your own time, Madam.

C. Bas. I must say that for Mr Manly, Madam, if making people easy is the rule of good-breeding, he is certainly the best bred man in the world.

Man. Soh! I am not to drop my acquaintance, I find—[*Aside.*] I am afraid, Sir, I shall grow vain upon your good opinion.

C. Bas. I don't know that, Sir; but, I am sure, what you are pleas'd to say, makes me so.

Man. The most impudent modesty that ever I met with.

La. Wrong. Lard! how ready his wit is! [*Aside.*]

Sir. Fran. Don't you think, Sir, the Count's a very fine gentleman?

Man. O! among the ladies, certainly.

Sir Fran. And yet he's as stout as a lion: Waund, he'll storm any thing. } *Apart,*

Man. Will he so? Why then, Sir, take care of your citadel.

Sir Fran. Ah! you are a wag, Cousin.

ACT IV. A JOURNEY to LONDON. 77

Man. I hope, Ladies, the town air continues to agree with you? — *[Of which I feel much.]*

Jen. O! perfectly well, Sir! we have been abroad in our new coach all day long—and we have bought an ocean of fine things. And to-morrow we go to the masquerade! and on Friday to the play! and on Saturday to the opera! and on Sunday, we are to be at the what-d'ye call it—assembly, and see the ladies play at quadrille, and picquet and ombre, and hazard, and basset! and on Monday, we are to see the King! and so on Tuesday—

La. Wrong. Hold, hold, Miss! you must not let your tongue run so fast, child—you forget! you know. I brought you hither to learn modesty.

Man. Yes, yes! and she is improved with a vengeance— *[Aside.]*

Jen. Lard! Mamma, I am sure I did not say any harm, and if one must not speak in one's turn, one may be kept under as long as one lives, for ought I see.

La. Wrong. O' my conscience, this girl grows so headstrong—

Sir Fran. Ay, ay, there's your fine growing spirit for you! Now tack it down, an' you can.

Jen. All I said, Papa, was only to entertain my Cousin Manly.

Man. My pretty dear, I am mightily oblig'd to you.

Jen. Look you there now, Madam.

La. Wrong. Hold your tongue, I say.

Jen. *[Turning away and glowing.]* I declare it, I won't bear it: she is always snubbing me before you, Sir,—I know why she does it, well enough—

[Aside to the Count.]

C. Bas. Hush, hush, my dear! don't be uneasy at that! she'll suspect us. *[Aside.]*

Jen. Let her suspect, what do I care— I don't know but I have as much reason to suspect as she— tho' perhaps I'm not so afraid of her.

C. Bas. *[Aside.]* I'gad, if I don't keep a tight hand on my tit, here, she'll run away with my project before I can bring it to bear.

La. Wrong. *[Aside.]* Perpetually hanging upon him!

78 The PROVOK'D HUSBAND; or, Act IV.

the young harlot is certainly in love with him; but I must not let them see I think so—and yet I can't bear it. Upon my life, Count, you'll spoil that forward girl—you should not encourage her so.

C. Bas. Pardon me, Madam, I was only advising her to observe what your Ladyship said to her.

Man. Yes, truly, her observations have been somewhat particular. [*Aside.*]

C. Bas. In one word, Madam, she has a jealousy of your Ladyship, and I am fore'd to encourage her; to blind it; 'twill be better to take no notice of her behaviour to me.

La. Wrong. You are right, I will be more cautious. [*Apart.*]

C. Bas. To-morrow at the masquerade, we may lose her.

La. Wrong. We shall be observ'd. I'll send you a note, and settle that affair—go on with the girl, and don't mind me.

C. Bas. I have been taking your part, my little angel.

La. Wrong. Jenny, come hither, Child—you must not be so hasty, my dear—I only advise you for your good.

Jen. Yes, Mamma; but when I am told of a thing before company, it always makes me worse, you know.

Man. If I have any skill in the fair sex; Miss, and her Mamma, have only quarrel'd, because they are both of a mind. This facetious Count seems to have made a very genteel step into the family. [*Aside.*]

Enter MYRTILLA. [*Manly talks apart with her.*]

La. Wrong. Well, Sir Francis, and what news have you brought us from Westminster to-day?

Sir Fran. News, Madam? Pcod! I have some—and such as does not come every day, I can tell you—a word in your ear—I have got a promise of a place at court of a thousand pawnd a year already.

La. Wrong. Have you so, Sir? and pray who may you thank for't? Now! who's in the right? is not this better than throwing so much away, after a flinking pack of fox-hounds in the country? now your family may be the better for it!

ACT IV. A JOURNEY to LONDON. 79

Sir Fran. Nay! that's what persuaded me to come up my dove.

La. Wrong. Mighty well—come—let me have another hundred pound then.

Sir Fran. Another child? waunds! you have had one hundred this morning; pray what's become of that, my dear?

La. Wrong. What's become of it? why I'll shew you, my love! Jenny! have you the bills about you?

Jen. Yes, Mamma.

La. Wrong. What's become of it? why laid out, my dear, with fifty more to it, that I was fore'd to borrow of the Count here.

Jen. Yes, indeed, Papa, and that would hardly do neither.—There's th' account.

Sir Fran. [Turning over the bills.] Let's see! let's see! what the devil have we got here?

Man. Then you have founded your aunt you say, and she readily comes into all I propos'd to you?

Myr. Sir, I'll answer, with my life, she is most thankfully yours in every article: she mightily desires to see you, Sir. *Apart.*

Man. I am going home directly: bring her to my house in half an hour; and if she makes good what you tell me, you shall both find your account in it.

Myr. Sir, she shall not fail you.

Sir Fran. Ods-life! Madam, here's nothing but toys and trinkets, and fans, and clock-stockings, by wholesale.

La. Wrong. There's nothing but what's proper, and for your credit, Sir Francis—Nay, you see I am so good a housewife, that in necessities for myself, I have scarce laid out a shilling.

Sir Fran. No, by my troth, so it seems; for the devil o'one thing's here that I can see you have any occasion for!

La. Wrong. My dear, do you think I came hither to live out of the fashion! why, the greatest distinction of

88 The PROVOK'D HUSBAND; or, ACT IV.

A fine lady in this town is in the variety of pretty things that she has no occasion for.

Jen. Sure, Papa, could you imagine that women of quality wanted nothing but stays and petticoats?

La. Wrong. Now, that is to like him!

Man. So! the family comes on finely. [Aside.

La. Wrong. Lard, if men were always to govern, what dowdies would they reduce their wives to!

Sir Fran. An hundred pound in the morning, and want another afore night! waunds and five! the Lord Mayor of London could not hold it at this rate!

Man. O! do you feel it, Sir? [Aside.

La. Wrong. My dear, you seem uneasy; let me have the hundred pound, and compose yourself.

Sir Fran. Compose the devil, Madam! why, do you consider what a hundred pound a day comes to in a year?

La. Wrong. My life, if I account with you from one day to another, that's really all my head is able to bear at a time——But I'll tell you what I consider——I consider that my advice has got you a thousand pound a year this morning——That now, methinks, you might consider, Sir.

Sir Fran. A thousand a year? wounds, Madam, but I have not touch'd a penny of it yet!

Man. Nor ever will, I'll answer for him. [Aside.

Enter Squire RICHARD.

Sq. Rich. Feather, an you don't come quickly, the meat will be coal'd; and I'd fain pick a bit with you.

La. Wrong. Bless me, Sir Francis! you are not going to sup by yourself!

Sir Fran. No, but I'm going to dine by myself, and that's pretty near the matter, Madam.

La. Wrong. Had not you as good stay a little, my dear? we shall all eat in half an hour; and I was thinking to ask my cousin Manly to take a family morsel with us.

Sir Fran. Nay, for my cousin's good company, I don't care if I ride a day's journey without baiting.

Man. By no means, Sir Francis, I am going upon a little business.

Act IV.

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ACT IV. A JOURNEY to LONDON. 85

Sir Fran. Well, Sir, I know you don't love compliments.

Man. You'll excuse me, Madam——

La. Wrong. Since you have business, Sir——

[*Exit Manly.*]

Enter Mrs MOTHERLY.

O, Mrs Motherly! you were saying this morning, you had some very fine lace to shew me——can't I see it now?

[*Sir Francis starts.*]

Moth. Why, really, Madam, I had made a sort of a promise to let the Countess of Nicely have the first sight of it for the birth-day; but your Ladyship——

La. Wrong. O, I die if I don't see it before her.

Sq. Rich. Woan't you goa, Feyther?

Sir Fran. Waunds! lad, I shall ha' no stomach at this rate! } *Apart.*

Moth. Well, Madam, tho' I say it, 'tis the sweetest pattern that ever came over——and for fineness——no cobweb comes up to it!

Sir Fran. Ods guts and gizzard, Madam! Lace as fine as a cobweb! why, what the devil's that to cost now?

Moth. Nay, Sir Francis does not like of it, Madam——

La. Wrong. He like it! Dear Mrs Motherly, he is not to wear it.

Sir Fran. Flesh, Madam! but I suppose I am to pay for it.

La. Wrong. No doubt on't! Think of your thousand a-year, and who got it you. Go! eat your dinner, and be thankful; go! [*Driving him to the door.*] Come, Mrs Motherly.

[*Exit La. Wrong. with Mrs Moth.*]

Sir Fran. Very fine! so here I mun fast, till I am almost famish'd for the good of my country; while Madam is laying me out an hundred pound a-day in lace, as fine as a cobweb, for the honour of my family! Ods-flesh! things had need go well at this rate!

Sq. Rich. Nay, nay——come, Feyther.

[*Exit Sir Fran. and Sq. Rich.*]

82 The PROVOK'D HUSBAND; or, Act IV.

Enter Mrs MOTHERLY.

Moth. Madam, my Lady desires you and the Count will please to come and assist her fancy in some of the new laces.

C. Bas. We'll wait upon her——

[Exit Mrs Motherly.]

Jen. So! I told you how it was! you see she can't bear to leave us together.

C. Bas. No matter, my dear: you know she has ask'd me to stay supper; so, when your papa and she are a-bed, Mrs Myrtila will let me into the house again; then you may steal into her chamber, and we'll have a pretty sneaker of punch together.

Myr. Ay, ay, Madam, you may command me any thing.

Jen. Well, that will be pure!

C. Bas. But you had best go to her alone, my life: it will look better if I come after you.

Jen. Ay, so it will: and to-morrow you know at the masquerade. And then!—hey! Oh, I'll have a husband! ay, marry, &c. *[Exit singing.]*

Myr. So, Sir! am not I very commodious to you?

C. Bas. Well, child! and don't you find your account in it? did not I tell you we might still be of use to one another?

Myr. Well, but how stands your affair with Mills, in the main?

C. Bas. O she's mad for the masquerade! it drives like a nail, we want nothing now but a parson, to clinch it. Did not your aunt say she could get one at a short warning?

Myr. Yes, yes, my Lord Townly's chaplain is her cousin you know; he'll do your business and mine, at the same time.

C. Bas. O! it's true! but where shall we appoint him?

Myr. Why, you know my Lady Townly's house is always open to the masques upon a ball-night, before they go to the Hay-market.

C. Bas. Good.

ACT IV. A JOURNEY TO LONDON. 83

Myr. Now the Doctor purposes we should all come thither in our habits, and when the rooms are full, we may steal up into his chamber, he says, and there—crack—he'll give us all canonical commission to go to bed together.

C. Bas. Admirable! Well, the devil fetch me if I shall not be heartily glad to see thee well settled, child.

Myr. And may the black gentleman tuck me under his arm at the same time, if I shall not think myself oblig'd to you, as long as I live.

C. Bas. One kiss for old acquaintance sake—I'gad, I shall want to be busy again!

Myr. O, you'll have one shortly will find you employment: but I must run to my Squire.

C. Bas. And I to the ladies—so your humble servant, sweet Mrs Wronghead.

Myr. Yours, as in duty bound, most noble Count Basset. [Exit Myr.]

C. Bas. Why, ay, Count! That title has been of some use to me indeed! not that I have any more pretence to it, than I have to a blue ribband. Yet I have made a pretty considerable figure in life with it: I have loll'd in my own chariot, dealt at assemblies, din'd with ambassadors, and made one at quadrille, with the first women of quality——But——*tempora mutantur*——since that damn'd squadron at White's have left me out of their last secret, I am reduced to trade upon my own stock of industry, and make my last push upon a wife: if my card comes up right, (which I think can't fail), I shall once more cut a figure, and cock my hat in the face of the best of them: for since our modern men of fortune are grown wise enough to be sharpers; I think sharpers are fools that don't take up the airs of men of quality. [Exit.]

ACT V. SCENE I

MANLY meeting Sir FRANCIS:

MANLY.

SIR Francis, your servant; how came I by the favour of this extraordinary visit?

Sir Fran. Ah, Cousin!

Man. Why that sorrowful face, man?

Sir Fran. I have no friend alive but you——

Man. I am sorry for that—but what's the matter?

Sir Fran. I have play'd the fool by this journey, I see now—for my bitter wife——

Man. What of her?

Sir Fran. Is playing the devil!

Man. Why, truly, that's a part that most of your fine ladies begin with, as soon as they get to London

Sir Fran. If I am a living man, Cousin, she has made away with above two hundred and fifty pounds since yesterday morning!

Man. Hah! I see a good housewife will do a great deal of work in a little time.

Sir Fran. Work do they call it? fine work indeed!

Man. Well, but how do you mean made away with it? What, she has laid it out, may be—but I suppose you have an account of it.

Sir Fran. Yes, yes, I have had the account, indeed; but I mun needs say, it's a very sorry one.

Man. Pray, let's hear.

Sir Fran. Why, first I let her have an hundred and fifty, to get things handsome about her, to let the world see that I was somebody! and I thought that sum was very genteel.

Man. Indeed I think so; and in the country, might have serv'd her a twelvemonth.

Sir Fran. Why, so it might—but here in this fine tawn, forsooth! it could not get through four and twenty hours—for in half that time it was all

squander'd away in bawbles, and new-fashion'd trumpery.

Man. O! for ladies in London, Sir Francis, all this might be necessary.

Sir Fran. Noa! there's the plague on't! the devil o' one useful thing do I see for it, but two pair of lac'd shoes, and those stond me in three pound three shillings a pair too.

Man. Dear Sir, this is nothing! Why, we have city wives here, that while their good man is selling three penny worth of sugar, will give you twenty pound for a short apron.

Sir Fran. Mercy on us! what a mortal poor devil is a husband!

Man. Well, but I hope you have nothing else to complain of?

Sir Fran. Ah! would I could say so too—but there's another hundred behind yet, that goes more to my heart than all that went before it.

Man. And how might that be disposed of?

Sir Fran. Troth, I am almost asham'd to tell you.

Man. Out with it.

Sir Fran. Why, she hus been at an assembly.

Man. What, since I saw you! I thought you had all sup'd at home last night.

Sir Fran. Why, so we did—and all as merry as grigs—I'cod! my heart was so open, that I tois'd another hundred into her apron, to go out early this morning with—But the cloth was no sooner taken away, than in comes my Lady Townly here; (—who between you and I—mum! has had the devil to pay yonder—) with another rantipole dame of quality, and out they must have her, they said, to introduce her at my Lady Noble's assembly forsooth—a few words, you may be sure, made the bargain—so, bawnce! and away they drive as if the devil had got into the coach-box—so about four or five in the morning—home comes Madam, with her eyes a foot deep in her head—and my poor hundred pound left behind her at the hazard-table.

86 The PROVOK'D HUSBAND; or, Act V.

Man. All lost at dice!

Sir Fran. Every shilling——among a parcel of pig-tail puppies, and pale-fac'd women of quality.

Man. But pray, Sir Francis, how came you, after you found her so ill an housewife of one sum, so soon to trust her with another?

Sir Fran. Why, truly, I mun say that was partly my own fault: for if I had not been a blab of my tongue, I believe that last hundred might have been sav'd.

Man. How so?

Sir Fran. Why, like an owl as I was, out of goodwill, forsooth, partly to keep her in humour, I must needs tell her of the thousand pound a year I had just got the promise of—I'cod! she lays her claws upon it that moment——said it was owing to her advice, and truly she would have her share on't.

Man. What, before you had it yourself?

Sir Fran. Why, ay! that's what I told her——My dear, said I, mayhap I mayn't receive the first quarter on't this half year.

Man. Sir Francis, I have heard you with a great deal of patience, and I really feel compassion for you.

Sir Fran. Truly, and well you may, Cousin, for I don't see that my wife's goodness is a bit the better for bringing to London

Man. If you remember, I gave you a hint of it.

Sir Fran. Why, ay, it's true you did so: but the devil himself could not have believ'd she would have rid post to him.

Man. Sir, if you stay but a fortnight in this town, you will every day see hundreds as fast upon the gallop as she is

Sir Fran. Ah! this London is a base place indeed——waunds, if things should happen to go wrong with me at Westminster, at this rate, now the devil shall I keep out of a jail?

Man. Why, truly, there seems to be but one way to avoid it.

Sir Fran. Ah! would you could tell me that, Cousin.

Man. The way lyes plain before you, Sir; the same

ACT V. A JOURNEY to LONDON. 87

road that brought you hither will carry you safe home again.

Sir Fran. Odsseff, Cousin! what! and leave a thousand pound a year behind me?

Man. Pooh! pooh! leave any thing behind you but your family, and you are a saver by it.

Sir Fran. Ay, but consider, Cousin, what a scurvy figure shall I make in the country, if I come down without it!

Man. You will make a much more lamentable figure in a jail without it.

Sir Fran. Mayhap 'at you have no great opinion of it then, Cousin?

Man. Sir Francis, to do you the service of a real friend, I must speak very plainly to you: you don't yet see half the ruin that's before you?

Sir Fran. Good-lack! how may yow mean, Cousin?

Man. In one word, your whole affairs stand thus — In a week you'll lose your seat at Westminster; in a fortnight my lady will run you into jail, by keeping the best company — In four and twenty hours, your daughter will run away with a sharper, because she han't been us'd to better company: and your son will steal into marriage with a cast mistress, because he has not been us'd to any company at all.

Sir Fran. If th' name o' goodness, why should you think all this?

Man. Because I have proof of it; in short, I know so much of their secrets, that if all this is not prevented to-night, it will be out of your power to do it to-morrow morning.

Sir Fran. Mercy upon us! you frighten me. — Well, Sir, I will be govern'd by yow: but what am I to do in this case?

Man. I have not time here to give you proper instructions: but, about eight this evening, I'll call at your lodgings; and there you shall have full conviction how much I have it at heart to serve you.

88 The PROVOK'D HUSBAND; or, Act V.

Enter a SERVANT.

Serv. Sir, my Lord desires to speak with you.

Man. I'll wait upon him.

Sir Fran. Well then, I'll go straight home now.

Man. At eight depend upon me.

Sir Fran. Ah, dear Cousin! I shall be bound to you as long as I live. Mercy deliver us! what a terrible journey have I made on't! *[Exeunt severally.]*

The SCENE opens to a Dressing Room. Lady TOWNLY, as just up, walks to her Toilet, leaning on Mrs TRUSTY.

Trusty. Dear Madam, what should make your Ladyship so out of order?

La. Town. How is it possible to be well, where one is kill'd for want of sleep?

Trusty. Dear me! it was so long before you rung, Madam, I was in hopes your Ladyship had been finely compos'd.

La. Town. Compos'd! why, I have lain in an inn here! this house is worse than an inn with ten stage-coaches! What between my Lord's impertinent people of business in a morning, and the intolerable thick shoes of footmen at noon, one has not a wink all night.

Trusty. Indeed, Madam, it's a great pity my Lord can't be persuaded into the hours of people of quality—Though I must say that, Madam, your Ladyship is certainly the best matrimonial manager in town.

La. Town. Oh! you are quite mistaken, *Trusty*! I manage very ill! for notwithstanding all the power I have, by never being over-fond of my Lord—yet I want money infinitely oftener than he is willing to give it me.

Trusty. Ah, if his Lordship could but be brought to play himself, Madam, then he might feel what it is to want money.

La. Town. Oh! don't talk of it! do you know that I am undone, *Trusty*?

Trusty. Mercy forbid, Madam!

La. Town. Broke! ruin'd! plunder'd!—stripp'd, even to a confiscation of my last guinea!

Trusty. You don't tell me so, Madam!

La. Town. And where to raise ten pound in the world? What is to be done, *Trusty*?

Trusty. Truly, I wish I were wise enough to tell you, Madam: but may be your Ladyship may have a run of better fortune, upon some of the good company that comes here to night.

La. Town. But I have not a single guinea to try my fortune!

Trusty. Ha! that's a bad business indeed, Madam—Adad! I have a thought in my head, Madam, if it is not too late—

La. Town. Out with it quickly then, I beseech thee.

Trusty. Has not the steward something of fifty pound, Madam, that you left in his hands, to pay somebody about this time?

La. Town. O, say! I had forgot!—Was to—a—what's his filthy name?

Trusty. Now I remember, Madam, 'twas to Mr Lute-
string your old mercer, that your Ladyship turn'd off, about a year ago, because he would trust you no longer.

La. Town. The very wretch! if he has not paid it, run quickly, dear *Trusty*, and bid him bring it hither immediately.—*[Exit Trusty.]* Well! sure mortal woman never had such fortune! five! five and nine, against poor seven for ever!—No! after that horrid bar of my chance, that Lady Wronghead's fatal red fist upon the table, I saw it was impossible ever to win another stake.—Sit up all night! lose all one's money! dream of winning thousands! wake without a shilling! and then—how like a hag I look! in short—the pleasures of life are not worth this disorder! if it were not for shame now, I could almost think Lady Grace's sober scheme not quite so ridiculous.—If my wise Lord could but hold his tongue for a week, 'tis odds but I should hate the town in a fortnight.—But I will not be driven out of it, that's positive!

Trusty. O Madam! there is no bearing it! Mr Lute-string was just let in at the door, as I came to the stair foot! and the steward is now actually paying him the money in the hall.

La. Town. Run to the stair-case head, again—and scream to him, that I must speak with him this instant.

[*Trusty runs out and speaks.*]

Trusty. Mr Poundage——a hem! Mr Poundage, a word with you quickly.

Pound. [within.] I'll come to you presently.

Trusty. Presently won't do, man, you must come this minute.

Pound. I am but just paying a little money, here.

Trusty. Cods my life! paying money? is the man distracted? come here I tell you, to my Lady, this moment, quick!

[*Trusty returns.*]

La. Town. Will the monster come or no?

Trusty. Yes, I hear him now, Madam, he is hobbling up, as fast as he can.

La. Town. Don't let him come in—for he will keep such a babbling about his accounts,—my brain is not able to bear him.

[*Poundage comes to the door with a money bag in his hand.*]

Trusty. O! it's well you are come, Sir; where's the fifty pound?

Pound. Why here it is; if you had not been in such haste, I should have paid it by this time—the man's now writing a receipt below, for it.

Trusty. No matter; my Lady says, you must not pay him with that money, there is not enough, it seems; there's a pistole, and a guinea, that is not good in it,——besides, there is a mistake in the account too——

[*Twitching the bag from him.*] But she is not at leisure to examine it now; so you must bid Mr What-d'ye-call-um call another time.

La. Town. What is all that noise there?

Pound. Why, and it please your Ladyship——

Act V. A JOURNEY TO LONDON. 91

La. Town. Pr'ythee, don't plague me now, but do as you were order'd.

Pound. Nay, what your Ladyship pleases, Madam—

[*Exit Poundage.*]

Trusty. There they are, Madam—[*Pours the money out of the bag.*] The pretty things—were so near falling into a nasty tradesman's hands, I protest it made me tremble for them—I fancy your Ladyship had as good give me that bad guinea, for luck's sake—thank you, Madam. [Takes a guinea.]

La. Town. Why, I did not bid you take it.

Trusty. No, but your Ladyship look'd as if you were just going to bid me, and so I was willing to save you the trouble of speaking, Madam.

La. Town. Well, thou hast deserv'd it, and so, for once—but hark, don't I hear the man making a noise yonder? though I think now we may compound for a little of his ill humour—

Trusty. I'll listen.

La. Town. Pr'ythee do. [Trusty goes to the door.]

Trusty. Ay, they are at it, Madam—he's in a bitter passion with poor Poundage—bless me! I believe he'll beat him—mercy on us, how the wretch swears!

La. Town. And a sober citizen too! that's a shame!

Trusty. Ha! I think all's silent, of a sudden—may be the porter has knock'd him down.—I'll step and see—[*Exit Trusty.*]

La. Town. Those trades-people are the troublesomest creatures! No words will satisfy them!

[Trusty returns.]

Trusty. O Madam! undone! undone! My Lord has just booted out upon the man, and is hearing all his pitiful story over—if your Ladyship pleases to come hither, you may hear him yourself?

La. Town. No matter: it will come round presently: I shall have it from my Lord, without losing a word by the way, I'll warrant you.

Trusty. O lud! Madam! here's my Lord just coming in.

La. Town. Do you get out of the way then. [Exit Trusty.]

92 The PROVOK'D HUSBAND; or, Act V.
Trusty.] I am afraid I want spirits! but he will soon
give 'em me.

Enter Lord TOWNLY.

L. Town. How comes it, Madam, that a tradesman
dares be clamourous in my house, for money due to him
from you?

La. Town. You don't expect, my Lord, that I should
answer for other peoples impertinence!

L. Town. I expect, Madam, you should answer for
your own extravagancies, that are the occasion of it—
I thought I had given you money three months ago, to
satisfy all these sort of people!

La. Town. Yes, but you see they never are to be sa-
tisfied.

L. Town. Nor am I, Madam, longer to be abus'd thus!
what's become of the last five hundred I gave you?

La. Town. Gone.

L. Town. Gone! what way, Madam?

La. Town. Half the town over, I believe, by this time.

L. Town. 'Tis well; I see ruin will make no impres-
sion, till it falls upon you.

La. Town. In short, my Lord, if money is always the
subject of our conversation, I shall make you no answer.

L. Town. Madam! Madam! I will be heard, and
make you answer.

La. Town. Make me! then I must tell you, my Lord,
this is a language I have not been us'd to, and I won't
bear it.

L. Town. Come, come, Madam! you shall bear a great
deal more, before I part with you.

La. Town. My Lord, if you insult me, you will have
as much to bear on your side, I can assure you.

L. Town. Pooh! your spirit grows ridiculous—
you have neither honour, worth, or innocence, to sup-
port it!

La. Town. You'll find, at least, I have resentment!
and do you look well to the provocation.

L. Town. After those you have given me, Madam,
'tis almost infamous to talk with you.

La. Town. I scorn your imputation, and your me-

naces! The narrowness of your heart's your monitor! 'Tis there! there, my Lord, you are wounded; you have less to complain of than many husbands of an equal rank to you.

L. Town. Death, Madam! do you presume upon your corporal merit! that your person's less tainted than your mind! is it there! there alone an honest husband can be injur'd? Have you not every other vice that can debase your birth, or stain the heart of woman? Is not your health, your beauty, husband, fortune, family disclaim'd, for nights consum'd in riot and extravagance? The wanton does no more; if she conceals her shame, does less: and sure, the dissolute avow'd, as sorely wrongs my honour, and my quiet.

La. Town. I see, my Lord, what sort of wife might please you.

L. Town. Ungrateful woman! could you have seen yourself, you, in yourself, had seen her—I am amaz'd our legislature has left no precedent of a divorce for this more visible injury, this adultery of the mind, as well as that of the person! when a woman's whole heart is alienated to pleasures I have no share in, what is't to me, whether a black ace, or a powder'd coxcomb has possession of it?

La. Town. If you have not found it yet, my Lord, this is not the way to get possession of mine, depend upon it.

L. Town. That, Madam, I have long despair'd of; and since our happiness cannot be mutual, 'tis fit, that with our hearts, our persons too should separate.—This house you sleep no more in! Tho' your content might grossly feed upon the dishonour of a husband, yet my desires would starve upon the features of a wife.

La. Town. Your style, my Lord, is much of the same delicacy with your sentiments of honour.

L. Town. Madam, Madam! this is no time for compliments.—I have done with you.

La. Town. If we had never met, my Lord, I had not broke my heart for it! But have a care! I may not, perhaps, be so easily recall'd as you imagine.

94 The PROVOK'D HUSBAND: or, ACT V.

L. Town. Recall'd! — Who's there! [*Enter a Servant.*] Desire my sister and Mr Manly to walk up.

L. Town. My Lord, you may proceed as you please; but pray what indiscretions have I committed, that are not daily practis'd by a hundred other women of quality?

L. Town. 'Tis not the number of ill wives, Madam, that makes the patience of a husband less contemptible: and though a bad one may be the best man's lot, yet he'll make a better figure in the world, that keeps his misfortunes out of doors, than he that tamely keeps them within.

La. Town. I don't know what figure you may make, my Lord, but I shall have no reason to be ashamed of mine, in whatever company I may meet you.

La. Town. Be sparing of your spirit, Madam, you'll need it to support you.

Enter Lady GRACE and MANLY.

Mr Manly, I have an act of friendship to beg of you, which wants more apologies than words can make for it.

Man. Then pray, make none, my Lord, that I may have the greater merit in obliging you.

L. Town. Sister, I have the same excuse to entreat of you too.

La. Grace. To your request, I beg, my Lord.

L. Town. Thus then — As you were both present at my ill-consider'd marriage, I now desire you each will be a witness of my determin'd separation. — I know, Sir, your good nature, and my sister's, must be shock'd at the office I impose on you; but, as I don't ask your justification of my cause, so I hope you are conscious — that an ill woman can't reproach you, if you are silent, upon her side.

Man. My Lord, I never thought, 'till now, it could be difficult to oblige you.

La. Grace. [*aside.*] Heavens! how I tremble!

L. Town. For you, my Lady Townly, I need not here repeat the provocations of my parting with you —

ACT V.

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Act V. A JOURNEY to LONDON. 95

the world, I fear, is too well inform'd of them.—For the good lord, your dead father's sake, I will still support you, as his daughter.—As the Lord Townly's wife, you have had every thing a fond husband could bestow, and (to our mutual shame I speak it) more than happy wives desire.—But those indulgences must end! State, equipage and splendor, but ill become the vices that misuse 'em.—The decent necessities of life shall be supplied—but not one article to luxury! Not even the coach, that waits to carry you from hence, shall you ever use again! Your tender aunt, my Lady Lovemore, with tears, this morning, has consented to receive you; where if time, and your condition brings you to a due reflection, your allowance shall be encreas'd—but, if you still are lavish of your little, or pine for past licentious pleasures, that little shall be less! nor will I call that soul my friend, that names you in my hearing!

La. Grace. My heart bleeds for her! [*Aside.*]

L. Town. O Manly, look there! turn back thy thoughts with me, and witness to my growing love! There was a time when I believ'd that form incapable of vice, or of decay! There I propos'd the partner of an easy home! there I, for ever, hop'd to find a cheerful companion, an agreeable intimate, a faithful friend, a useful help-mate, and a tender mother.—But, oh, how bitter now the disappointment!

Man. The world is different in its sense of happiness: offended as you are, I know you will still be just.

L. Town. Fear me not.

Man. This last reproach, I see, has struck her.

[*Aside.*]

L. Town. No, let me not, (tho' I this moment cast her from my heart for ever), let me not urge her punishment beyond her crimes.—I know the world is fond of any tale that feeds its appetite of scandal; and as I am conscious, severities of this kind seldom fail of imputations too gross to mention. I here, before you both, acquit her of the least suspicion rais'd against the

96 The PROVOK'D HUSBAND; or, Act V.

honour of my bed. Therefore, when abroad her conduct may be question'd, do her fame that justice.

La. Town. O sister! — [*Turns to La. Grace weeping.*]

L. Town. When I am spoken of, where, without favour, this action may be canvass'd, relate but half my provocations, and give me up to censure. [*Going.*]

La. Town. Support me! save me! hide me from the world! [*Falls on La. Grace's neck.*]

L. Town. returning.] — I had forgot me — You have no share in my resentment; therefore, as you have liv'd in friendship with her, your parting may admit of gentler terms than suit the honour of an injur'd husband. [*Offers to go out.*]

Man. interposing.] My Lord, you must not, shall not leave her thus! One moment's stay can do your cause no wrong! If looks can speak the anguish of the heart, I'll answer with my life, there's something labouring in her mind, that, would you bear the hearing, might deserve it.

L. Town. Consider! since we no more can meet, press not my staying to insult her.

La. Town. Yet stay, my Lord — the little I would say, will not deserve an insult; and undeserv'd, I know your nature gives it not. But as you've call'd in friends, to witness your resentment, let them be equal hearers of my last reply.

L. Town. I shan't refuse you that, Madam — be it so.

La. Town. My Lord, you ever have complain'd I wanted love; but as you kindly have allowed I never gave it to another, so when you hear the story of my heart, though you may still complain, you will not wonder at my coldness.

La. Grace. This promises a reverse of temper. [*Apart.*]

Man. This, my Lord, you are concern'd to hear!

L. Town. Proceed, I am attentive.

La. Town. Before I was your bride, my Lord, the flattering world had talk'd me into beauty; which, at my glass, my youthful vanity confirm'd: wild with that fame, I thought mankind my slaves, I triumph'd over hearts, while all my pleasure was their pain: yet was my own so equally insensible to all, that when a father's

ACT V. A JOURNEY to LONDON. 99

firm commands enjoin'd me to make choice of one; I even there declin'd the liberty he gave, and to his own election yielded up my youth—His tender care, my Lord, directed him to you—Our hands were join'd; but still my heart was wedded to its folly! my only joy was power, command, society, profuseness, and to lead in pleasures: the husband's right to rule, I thought a vulgar law, which only the deform'd or meanly-spirited obey'd! I knew no directors but my passions; no master but my will! even you, my Lord, some time o'ercome by love, was pleas'd with my delights; nor, then, foresaw this mad misuse of your indulgence—And though I call myself ungrateful, while I own it, yet, as a truth, it cannot be deny'd—That kind indulgence has undone me! it added strength to my habitual failings, and in a heart thus warm, in wild unthinking life, no wonder if the gentler sense of love was lost.

L. Town. O Manly! where has this creature's heart been buried?

Man. If yet recoverable—how vast a } *Apart.*
treasure!

La. Town. What I have said, my Lord, is not my excuse, but my confession! my errors (give 'em, if you please, a harder name) cannot be defended! no! what's in its nature wrong, no words can palliate, no plea can alter: what then remains in my condition, but resignation to your pleasure? time only can convince you of my future conduct: therefore, 'till I have liv'd an object of forgiveness, I dare not hope for pardon—The penance of a lonely contrite life were little to the innocent; but to have deserv'd this separation, will strow perpetual thorns upon my pillow.

La. Grace. O happy, heavenly hearing!

La. Town. Sister, farewell! [Kissing her.] Your virtue needs no warning from the shame that falls on me: but when you think I have aton'd my follies past—persuade your injur'd brother to forgive them.

L. Town. No, Madam! your errors thus renounc'd, this instant are forgotten! so deep, so due a sense of

VOL. III.

98 The PROVOK'D HUSBAND; or, Act V.

them, has made you what my utmost wishes form'd,
and all my heart has sigh'd for.

La. Town. [Turning to Lady Grace.] How odious
does this goodness make me!

La. Grace. How amiable your thinking so!

L. Town. Long-parted friends, that pass through easy
voyages of life, receive but common gladness in their
meeting: but from a shipwreck sav'd, we mingle tears
with our embraces!

[Embracing Lady Townly.]
La. Town. What words! what love! what duty can
repay such obligations!

L. Town. Preserve but this desire to please, your
power is endless!

La. Town. Oh!—till this moment, never did I know,
my Lord, I had a heart to give you!

L. Town. By Heav'n! this yielding hand, when first
it gave you to my wishes, presented not a treasure more
desirable! O Manly! Sister! as you have often shar'd
in my disquiet, partake of my felicity! my newborn
joy! see here the bride of my desires! This may be
called my wedding day.

La. Grace. Sister! (for now methinks that name is
dearer to my heart than ever) let me congratulate the
happiness that opens to you.

Man. Long, long, and mutual may it flow—

L. Town. To make our happiness compleat, my
dear, join here with me to give a hand, that amply
will repay the obligation.

La. Town. Sister! a day like this—

La. Grace. Admits of no excuse against the general
joy.

[Gives her hand to Manly.]
Man. A joy like mine—despairs of words to speak it.

L. Town. O Manly! how the name of friend endears
the brother!

[Embracing him.]
Man. Your words, my Lord, will warm me, to de-
serve them.

Enter a SERVANT.

Serv. My Lord, the apartments are full of masque-
raders—and some people of quality there desire to
see your Lordship, and my Lady.

ACT V. A JOURNEY TO LONDON. 99

La. Town. I thought, my Lord, your orders had forbid this revelling?

L. Town. No, my dear, Manly has desir'd their admittance to night, it seems, upon a particular occasion—say we will wait upon them instantly. [*Exit Servant.*]

La. Town. I shall be but ill company to them.

L. Town. No matter: not to see them, would on a sudden be too particular. Lady Grace will assist you to entertain them.

La. Town. With her, my Lord, I shall be always easy—Sister, to your unerring virtue I now commit the guidance of my future days—

Never the paths of pleasure more to tread,
But where your guarded innocence shall lead,
For in the marriage-state the world must own,
Divided happiness was never known.

To make it mutual, nature points the way:

Let husbands govern: Gentle wives obey. [*Exeunt.*]

MANLY re-enters with Sir FRANCIS WRONGHEAD.

Sir Fran. Well, Cousin, you have made my very hair stand on end! Waunds! if what you tell me be true, I'll stuff my whole family into a stage coach, and trundle them into the country again on Monday morning.

Man. Stick to that, Sir, and we may yet find a way to redeem all: in the mean time, place yourself behind this screen, and for the truth of what I have told you, take the evidence of your own senses: but be sure you keep close till I give you the signal.

Sir Fran. Sir, I'll warrant you—Ah! my Lady, my Lady Wronghead! what a bitter business have you drawn me into!

Man. Hush! to your post; here comes one couple already.

[*Sir Francis retires behind the screen. Exit Manly.*]

Enter MYRTILLA, with Squire RICHARD.

Sq. Rich. What! is this the Doctor's chamber?

Myr. Yes, yes, speak softly.

Sq. Rich. Well, but where is he?

100 The PROVOK'D HUSBAND: or, Act V.

Myr. He'll be ready for us presently, but he says he can't do us the good turn, without witnesses: so, when the Count and your sister come, you know he and you may be fathers for one another.

Sq. Rich. Well, well, tit for tat! Ay, ay, that will be friendly.

Myr. And see! here they come.

Enter Count BASSET, and Miss JENNY.

C. Bas. So, so, here's your brother, and his bride, before us, my dear.

Jen. Well, I vow my heart's at my mouth still! I thought I should never have got rid of mamma! but while she stood gaping upon the dance, I gave her the slip! Lawd! do but feel how it beats here.

C. Bas. O the pretty flutterer! I protest, my dear, you have put mine into the same palpitation!

Jen. Ah! you say so—but let's see now—O lud! I vow it thumps purely—well, well, I see it will do, and so, where's the parson?

C. Bas. Mrs Myrtilla, will you be so good as to see if the Doctor's ready for us?

Myr. He only staid for you, Sir: I'll fetch him immediately. *[Exit Myr.]*

Jen. Pray, Sir, am not I to take place of mamma, when I'm a countess?

C. Bas. No doubt on't, my dear.

Jen. O lud! how her back will be up then, when she meets me at an assembly! or you and I in our coach and six, at Hyde-park together!

C. Bas. Ay, or when she hears the box-keepers, at an opera, call out—*The Countess of Basset's servants!*

Jen. Well, I say it, that will be delicious! and then, mayhap, to have a fine gentleman with a star, and what-d'ye-call um ribbon, lead me to my chair, with his hat under his arm all the way! Hold up! says the chairmen; and so, says I, my Lord, your humble servant. I suppose, Madam, says he, we shall see you at my Lady Quadrille's! Ay, ay, to be sure, my Lord, says I—So in swops me, with my hoop stuff'd up to

ACT V. A JOURNEY to LONDON. 101

my forehead! and away they trot, swing, swang! with my tassels dangling, and my flambeaux blazing, and—oh, it's a charming thing to be a woman of quality!

C. Bas. Well, I see that plainly, my dear, there's ne'er a duchess of 'em all will become an equipage like you.

Jen. Well, well, do you find equipage, and I'll find airs, I warrant you. [*Sings.*

Sq. Rich. Troth! I think this masquerading's the merriest game that ever I saw in my life! Thof, in my mind, and there were but a little wrestling, or cudgel-playing naw, it would help it hugely. But what a-rope makes the parson stay so?

C. Bas. Oh, here he comes, I believe.

Enter MYRTILLA, with a CONSTABLE.

Const. Well, Madam, pray which is the party that wants a spice of my office here?

Myr. That's the gentleman. [*Pointing to the Count.*

C. Bas. Hey-day! what, in masquerade, Doctor?

Const. Doctor, Sir! I believe you have mistaken your man: but if you are called Count Basset, I have a billet-doux in my hand for you, that will set you right presently.

C. Bas. What the devil's the meaning of all this?

Const. Only my Lord Chief Justice's warrant against you for forgery, Sir.

C. Bas. Blood and thunder!

Const. And so, Sir, if you please to pull off your fool's frock there, I'll wait upon you to the next Justice of peace immediately.

Jen. O dear me, what's the matter! [*Trembling.*

C. Bas. O, nothing! only a masquerading frolic, my dear.

Sq. Rich. Oh, ho! is that all?

Sir Fran. No, sirrah! that is not all.

[*Sir Francis coming softly behind the Squire, knocks him down with his cane.*]

102 The PROVOK'D HUSBAND; or, Act V.

Enter MANLY.

Sq. Rich. O lawd, O lawd! he has beaten my brains out!

Man. Hold, hold, Sir Francis, have a little mercy upon my poor godson, pray Sir.

Sir Fran. Waunds, Cozen, I han't patience.

C. Bas. Manly! nay, then I'm blown to the devil.

[*Aside.*

Sq. Rich. O my head, my head!

Enter Lady WRONGHEAD.

La. Wrong. What's the matter here, gentlemen? for Heav'n's sake! What, are you murdering my children?

Const. No, no, Madam, no murder; only a little suspicion of felony, that's all.

Sir Fran. to Jenny.] And for you, Mrs Hot-upon't, I could find in my heart to make you wear that habit as long as you live, you jade you. Do you know, hussy, that you were within two minutes of marrying a pick-pocket?

C. Bas. So, so, all's out, I find. [*Aside.*

Jen. O the mercy! why, pray, Papa, is not the Count a man of quality then?

Sir Fran. O yes! one of the unhang'd ones, it seems.

[*La. Wrong. aside.*] Married! O the confident thing! There was his urgent business then—sighted for her! I han't patience!—and for ought I know, I have been all this while making a friendship with a highwayman!

Man. Mr Constable, secure there.

Sir Fran. Ah, my Lady, my Lady! this comes of your journey to London: but now I'll have a frolic of my own, Madam; therefore, pack up your trumpery this very night, for the moment my horses are able to crawl, you and your brats shall make a journey into the country again.

La. Wrong. Indeed you are mistaken, Sir Francis—I shall not stir out of town yet, I promise you.

Sir Fran. Not stir! Waunds! Madam——

Man. Hold, Sir!—If you'll give me leave a little—I

ACT V. A JOURNEY TO LONDON. 103

fancy I shall prevail with my Lady to think better on't.

Sir Fran. Ah, cousin, you are a friend indeed! I will

Man. apart to my Lady.] Look you, Madam, as to the favour you design'd me, in sending this spurious letter inclosed to my Lady Grace, all the revenge I have taken, is to have sav'd your son and daughter from ruin.—Now, if you will take them fairly and quietly into the country again, I will save your Ladyship from ruin.

La. Wrong. What do you mean, Sir?—

Man. Why, Sir Francis——shall never know what is in this letter; look upon it. How it came into my hands you shall know at leisure.

La. Wrong. Ha! my billet-doux to the Count! and an appointment in it! I shall sink with confusion!

Man. What shall I say to Sir Francis, Madam?

La. Wrong. Dear Sir, I am in such a trembling! preserve my honour, and I am all obedience! *[Apart to Manly.]*

Man. Sir Francis——my Lady is ready to receive your commands for her journey, whenever you please to appoint it.

Sir Fran. Ah, cousin! I doubt I'm obliged to you for it.

Man. Come, come, Sir Francis! take it as you find it. Obedience in a wife is a good thing, tho' it were never so wonderful!—And now, Sir, we have nothing to do but to dispose of this gentleman.

C. Baf. Mr Manly! Sir, I hope you won't ruin me.

Man. Did not you forge this note for five hundred pounds, Sir?

C. Baf. Sir——I see you know the world, and therefore I shall not pretend to prevaricate.—But it has hurt nobody yet, Sir! I beg you will not stigmatize me! since you have spoil'd my fortune in one family, I hope you won't be so cruel to a young fellow, as to put it out of my power, Sir, to make it in another, Sir!

Man. Look you, Sir, I have not much time to waste

104 The PROVOK'D HUSBAND; or, Act V.

with you: but if you expect mercy yourself, you must shew it to one you have been cruel to.

C. Bas. Cruel, Sir!

Man. Have you not ruin'd this young woman?

C. Bas. I, Sir!

Man. I know you have——therefore you can't blame her, if in the fact you are charg'd with, she is a principal witness against you. However, you have one, and one only chance to get off with. Marry her this instant—and you take off her evidence.

C. Bas. Dear Sir!

Man. No words, Sir; a wife or a mittimus.

C. Bas. Lord, Sir! this is the most unmerciful mercy!

Man. A private penance, or a public one?—Constable!

C. Bas. Hold, Sir, since you are pleas'd to give me my choice, I will not make so ill a compliment to the lady, as not to give her the preference.

Man. It must be done this minute, Sir: the chaplain you expected is still within call.

C. Bas. Well, Sir—since it must be so—Come, spouse—I am not the first of the fraternity, that has run his head into one noose, to keep it out of another.

Myr. Come, Sir, don't repine: marriage is at worst but playing upon the square.

C. Bas. Ay, but the worst of the match too, is the devil.

Man. Well, Sir, to let you see it is not so bad as you think it, as a reward for her honesty, in detesting your practices, instead of the forged bill you would have put upon her, there's a real one of five hundred pounds, to begin a new honey-moon with. [Gives it to Myr.]

C. Bas. Sir, this is so generous an act——

Man. No compliments, dear Sir—I am not at leisure now to receive them: Mr Constable, will you be so good as to wait upon this gentleman into the next room, and give this lady in marriage to him?

Const. Sir, I'll do it faithfully.

Act V. A JOURNEY to LONDON. 105

C. Basf. Well! five hundred will serve to make a handsome push with, however.

[*Exeunt Count, Myr. and Const.*

Sir Fran. And that I may be sure my family's rid of him for ever — come, my Lady, let's even take our children along with us, and be all witness of the ceremony. [*Exeunt Sir Fran. La. Wrong, Miss and Sq.*

Man. Now, my Lord, you may enter.

Enter Lord and Lady TOWNLY, and Lady GRACE.

L. Town. So, Sir, I give you joy of your negotiation.

Man. You overheard it all, I presume?

L. Grace. From first to last, Sir.

L. Town. Never were knaves and fools better dispos'd of.

Man. A sort of poetical justice, my Lord, not much above the judgment of a modern comedy.

L. Town. To heighten that resemblance, I think, Sister, there only wants your rewarding the hero of the fable, by naming the day of his happiness.

La. Grace. This day, to-morrow, every hour, I hope, of life to come, will shew I want not inclination to complete it.

Man. Whatever I may want, Madam, you will always find endeavours to deserve you.

L. Town. Then all are happy.

La. Town. Sister, I give you joy! consummate as the happiest pair can boast.

In you, methinks, as in a glass, I see

The happiness that once advanc'd to me.

So visible the bliss, so plain the way,

How was it possible my sense could stray?

But now, a convert to this truth I come,

That married happiness is never found from home.

[*Exeunt omnes.*

Music in the Fourth ACT.

Sung by Mrs CIBBER,

In the character of Miss JENNY.

OH, I'll have a husband! ay, marry;
For why should I longer tarry,
For why should I longer tarry
Than other brisk girls have done?
For if I stay, 'till I grow gray,
They'll call me old maid, and fusty old jade;
So I'll no longer tarry;
But I'll have a husband, ay, marry,
If money can buy me one.

My mother she says I'm too coming;
And still in my ears she is drumming,
And still in my ears she is drumming,
That I such vain thoughts shou'd shun,
My sisters they cry, Oh fy! and, oh fy!
But yet I can see, they're as coming as me;
So let me have husbands in plenty:
I'd rather have twenty times twenty,
Than die an old maid undone.



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MUSIC in the Fifth ACT.

Sung by Mrs CIBBER.

I.

WHAT tho' they call me country lass,
I read it plainly in my glass,
That for a duchess I might pass;
Oh, could I see the day!
Would Fortune but attend my call,
At park, at play, at ring and ball,
I'd brave the proudest of them all,
With a *Stand by*—*clear the way.*

II.

Surrounded by a croud of beaux,
With smart toupees, and powder'd clothes,
At rivals I'll turn up my nose;
Oh, could I see the day!
I'll dart such glances from these eyes,
Shall make some lord or duke my prize;
And then, Oh! how I'll tyrannize,
With a *Stand by*—*clear the way.*

III.

Oh! then for ev'ry new delight,
For equipage and diamonds bright,
Quadrille, and plays, and balls at night;
Oh, could I see the day!
Of love and joy I'd take my fill,
The tedious hours of life to kill,
In ev'ry thing I'd have my will,
With a *Stand by*—*clear the way.*

END OF THE FIFTH ACT.

EPILOGUE.

Spoken by Mrs OLDFIELD.

METHINKS I hear some powder'd critics say,
 "Damn it! this wise reform'd has spoil'd the play!"
 "The coxcomb should have drawn her more in fashion,
 "Have gratify'd her softer inclination,
 "Have tipt her a gallant, and clinch'd the provocation."
 But there our Bard stop'd short: for 'twere uncivil
 T' have made a modern belle, all o'er a devil!
 He hop'd, in honour of the sex, the age
 Would bear one mended woman——on the stage.

From whence, you see, by common sense's rules,
 Wives might be govern'd, were not husbands fools.
 Whate'er by Nature dames are prone to do,
 They seldom stray but when they govern you.
 When the wild wife perceives her deary tame,
 No wonder then she plays him all the game.
 But men of sense meet rarely that disaster;
 Women take pride, where merit is their master;
 Nay, she that with a weak man wisely lives,
 Will seem t' obey the due commands he gives!
 Happy obedience is no more a wonder,
 When men are men, and keep them kindly under.

But modern consorts are such high-bred creatures,
 They think a husband's power degrades their features;
 That nothing more proclaims a reigning beauty,
 Than that she never was reproach'd with duty:
 And that the greatest blessing Heav'n e'er sent,
 Is in a spouse incurious and content.

To give such dames a different cast of thought,
 By calling home the mind, these scenes were wrought.
 If with a hand too rude the task is done,
 We hope the scheme by Lady Grace laid down,
 Will all such freedom with the sex atone,
 That Virtue there, unsoil'd by modish art,
 Throws out attractions for a Manly's heart.

You, You then, Ladies, whose unquestion'd lives
 Give you the foremost fame of happy wives,
 Protect, for its attempt, this helpless play;
 Nor leave it to the vulgar taste a prey;
 Appear the frequent champions of its cause,
 Direct the croud, and give yourselves applause.

END OF THE PROVOK'D HUSBAND.



T H E
M I S E R.
A
C O M E D Y.

Taken from PLAUTUS and MOLIERE.

B Y
HENRY FIELDING, Esq;

To which is prefixed,
The LIFE of the AUTHOR.

Sevorum ventres modio castigat iniquo,
Ipse quoque esuriens: neque enim omnia sustinet unquam
Mucida cœrulei panis consumere frustra
Hesternum solitus medio servare minutal
Septembri; nec non differe in tempora cœnæ
Alterius, conchem æstivi cum partē lacerti
Signatim, vel dimidio patrique filuro,
Filæque sectivi numerata includere porri.
Invitatus ad hæc aliquis de ponte negabit,
Sed quò divitias hæc per tormenta coactas?
Cum furor haud dubius, cùm sit manifesta phrenesis,
Ut locuplūs moriaris; egenti vivere fato? JUVENAL.

EDINBURGH:

Printed by and for MARTIN & WOTHERSPOON;

M. DCC. LXXIII.

M I S E R

C O M E D Y

As performed at the Theatre Royal, Covent Garden, on Monday, the 1st of December, 1791.

By the Theatre Royal, Covent Garden.

The Fifth of the A. D. 1791.

By the Theatre Royal, Covent Garden, on Monday, the 1st of December, 1791.



Printed by J. DODD, at the Theatre Royal, Covent Garden.

LONDON: Printed by J. DODD, at the Theatre Royal, Covent Garden.

M. DCC. LXXII.

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TO HIS GRACE
CHARLES
DUKE OF
RICHMOND AND LENOX.

MY LORD,

AS there is scarce any vanity more general than that of desiring to be thought well received by the Great, pardon me if I take the first opportunity of boasting the countenance I have met with from one who is an honour to the high rank in which he is born. The Muses, my Lord, stand in need of such protectors; nor do I know under whose protection I can so properly introduce Moliere as that of your Grace, to whom he is as familiar in his own language as in ours.

The pleasure which I may be supposed to receive from an extraordinary success in so difficult an undertaking, must be indeed complete by your approbation. The perfect knowledge which your Grace is known to have of the manners, habits, and taste of that nation whence this Play is derived, makes you the properest Judge, wherein I have judiciously kept up to, or de-

iv D E D I C A T I O N.

parted from the original. The Theatre hath declared loudly in favour of *The Miser*; and You, my Lord, are to decide what share the translator merits in the applause.

I shall not grow tedious, by entering into the usual style of dedications: for my pen cannot accompany my heart when I speak of your Grace; and I am now writing to the only person living to whom such a panegyric would be displeasing. Therefore I shall beg leave to conclude with the highest on myself, by affirming that it is my greatest ambition to be thought,

My LORD,

Your GRACE's most obliged,

and most obedient humble servant.

HENRY FIELDING.



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T H E
L I F E
O F
HENRY FIELDING, Esq;

HENRY FIELDING was born at Sharpam Park in Somersetshire, April 22d 1707. His father, Edmund Fielding, Esq; served in the wars under the Duke of Marlborough, and, towards the close of the reign of King George I. or accession of King George II. was promoted to the rank of Lieutenant-General. He was grandson to an earl of Denbigh, nearly related to the Duke of Kingston, and many other noble and respectable families. His mother was daughter to Judge Gold, and aunt to Sir Henry Gold, one of the Barons of Exchequer. By these his parents he had four sisters, Catharine, Ursula, Sarah and Beatrice, and one brother, Edmund, who was an officer in the marine service. Sarah Fielding, his third sister, is well known to the literary world, by the proofs she has given of a lively and penetrating genius, in *David Simple*, *The Countess of Delwine*, *The Cry*, and other ingenious performances. Our author's mother having paid her debt to Nature, Lieut.-General Fielding married a second time, and the issue of that marriage were six sons, all of whom are dead, excepting Sir John, now in the commission of

the Peace for the counties of Middlesex, Surry, Essex, and the Liberties of Westminster.

Our Author received the first rudiments of his education at home, under the care of the Rev. Mr Oliver, for whom he seems to have had no very great regard, as he is said to have designed a portrait of his character in the very humorous, yet detestable one of Parson Trulliber, in his *Joseph Andrews*.

When taken from under this gentleman's charge, he was removed to Eton school, where he had an opportunity of cultivating a very early intimacy with Lord Lyttleton, Mr Fox, Mr Pitt, Sir Charles-Hanbury Williams, and many other respectable characters, who ever through life maintained a warm regard for him. But these were not the only advantages he reaped at that great seminary of education; for by an assiduous application to study, and the possession of strong and peculiar talents, he became, before he left that school, uncommonly versed in the Greek authors, and a perfect master of the Latin classics. Thus accomplished, at about eighteen years of age he left Eton, and went to Leyden, where he studied under the most celebrated Civilians for about two years; at the expiration of which time, remittances failing, he was obliged to return to London, not then quite twenty years of age.

The fact was, General Fielding, with very good inclinations to support his son in the handsomest manner, soon found it impracticable (his family being greatly increased by a second marriage) to make such appointments for him as he could have wished; the utmost that he was able to afford him being no more than two hundred pounds a year; *which any body* (as our Author himself used to say) *might pay that would*. With which slender income, a strong constitution, a lively imagination, and a disposition naturally but little formed for œconomy, he found himself his own master, in a place, too, where the temptations to every expensive pleasure are so numerous, and the means of gratifying them so easily attainable. From this unfortunately pleasing



situation sprung all those inconveniences which attended Mr Fielding throughout the remainder of his life. The brilliancy of his wit, the vivacity of his humour, and his high relish of social enjoyment, soon brought him into request with the men of taste and literature, and with the voluptuous of all ranks; and he soon found that his finances were by no means adequate to the frequent draughts made on him from the consequences of the brisk career of dissipation which he had launched into; yet, as disagreeable impressions never continued long upon his mind, but only, on the contrary, roused him to struggle through his difficulties with the greater spirit and magnanimity, he flatter'd himself that he should find resources in his wit and invention, and accordingly commenced a writer for the stage in 1727, at which time he had only attained the completion of his twentieth year.

His first attempt in the Drama was a piece called *Love in several Masques*; which, though it succeeded the long and crowded run of the *Provok'd Husband*, met with a favourable reception, as did likewise his second play, which came out in the following year, and was entitled, *The Temple Beau*. He did not, however, meet with equal success in all his Dramatic Works; for he has even printed in the title page of one of his farces, *As it was damn'd at the Theatre-Royal in Drury Lane*; and he himself informs us, in the general preface to his *Miscellanies*, that for *The Wedding Day*, though acted six nights, his profits did not exceed fifty pounds. Nor did a much better fate attend some of his more early productions: but the severity of the public, and the malice of his enemies, met with a noble alleviation from the patronage of the late Duke of Richmond, John Duke of Argyle, the late Duke of Roxborough, and many persons of distinguished rank and character; among whom may be numbered the present Lord Lyttleton, whose friendship to our Author softened the rigour of his misfortunes while he lived, and exerted itself towards his memory, when he was no more, by taking

pains to clear up imputations of a particular kind, which had been thrown out against his character.

It would be deviating from the intention of this essay, should we attempt to analyse the several dramatic compositions of this author; for he confessedly did not attain to pre-eminence in this branch of writing; it may be sufficient, therefore, to observe, that from the year 1727, to the end of 1764, almost all his plays and farces were written, not above two or three having appeared since that time.

Of our Author's other works, such, particularly, as were written before his genius was come to its full growth, an account will naturally be expected in this place; and fortunately he has spoken of them himself, in terms so modest and sensible, that the reader will dispense with any other criticism or analysis of them.

"The *Essay on Conversation*," says Mr Fielding, "was designed to ridicule out of society one of the most pernicious evils which attends it, viz. pampering the gross appetites of selfishness and ill-nature, with the shame and disquietude of others; whereas true good-breeding consists in contributing to the satisfaction and happiness of all about us."

"The *Essay on the Knowledge of the Characters of Men* exposes a second great evil, namely hypocrisy; the bane of all virtue, morality and goodness; and may serve to arm the honest, undesigning, open-hearted man, who is generally the prey of this monster, against it."

The *Journey from this World to the Next*, it should seem, provoked the dull, short-sighted, and malignant enemies of our Author, to charge him with an intention to subvert the settled notions of mankind in philosophy and religion: for he assures us, in form, that he did not intend, in this allegorical piece, "to oppose any prevailing system, or to erect a new one of his own. With greater justice," he adds, "that he might be arraigned of ignorance, for having, in the

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“ relation which he has put into the mouth of Julian, whom they call *the apostate*, done many violences to history, and mixed truth and falsehood with much freedom. But he professed fiction; and though he chose some facts out of history, to embellish his work, and fix a chronology to it, he has not, however, confined himself to nice exactness, having often antedated and sometimes post-dated the matter, which he found in the Spanish history, and transplanted into his work.”

With regard to the History of *Jonathan Wild*, his design, he tells us, was not “ to enter the list with that excellent historian, who, from authentic papers and records, &c. hath given so satisfactory an account of this great man; nor yet to contend with the memoirs of the Ordinary of Newgate, which generally contain a more particuilar relation of what the heroes are to suffer in the next world, than of what they did in this. The history of Jonathan Wild is rather a narrative of such actions as he might have performed, or would or should have performed, than what he really did; and may, in reality, as well suit any other such great man, as the person himself whose name it bears. As it is not a very faithful portrait of Jonathan Wild, so neither is it intended to represent the features of any other person: roguery, and not a rogue, is the subject; so that any particular application will be unfair in the reader, especially if he knows much of the great world, since he must then be acquainted with more than one on whom he can fix the resemblance.”

About six or seven years after Mr Fielding's commencing a writer for the stage, he fell in love with and married one Miss Craddock, a young lady from Salisbury, possessed of a very great share of beauty, and a fortune of fifteen hundred pounds; and his mother dying much about the same time, an estate at Stower in Dorsetshire, of somewhat better than two hundred pounds *per annum*, came into his possession.

THE LIFE OF

With this fortune, which, had it been conducted with prudence and œconomy, might have secured to him a state of independance for life, and with the helps it might have derived from the productions of a genius unincumbered with anxieties and perplexity, might have even afforded him an affluent income; with this, I say, and a wife whom he was fond of to distraction, and for whose sake he had taken up a resolution of bidding adieu to all the follies and intemperances to which he had addicted himself in that short but rapid career of a town life which he had run, he determined to retire to his country-seat, and there reside entirely.

But here, in spite of this prudent resolution, one folly only took place of another, and family pride now brought on him all the inconveniences in one place, that youthful dissipation and libertinism had done in another. The income he possessed, though sufficient for ease, and even some degree of elegance, was in no respect adequate to the support either of luxury or splendor. Yet fond of figure and magnificence, he incumbered himself with a large train of servants, and his natural turn leading him to a fondness for the delights of society and convivial mirth, he threw wide open the gates of hospitality, and suffered his whole patrimony to be devoured by hounds, horses, and entertainments. In short, in less than three years, from the mere passion of being esteemed a man of fortune, he reduced himself to the displeasing situation of having no fortune at all; and through an ambition of maintaining an open house for the reception of *every one else*, he soon found *himself* without a habitation which he could call his own. In a word, by a desire, as Shakespeare expresses it,

*—of shewing a more swelling port
Than his faint means would grant continuance,*

he was, in the course of a very short period, brought back to the same unfortunate situation which he had before experienced; but with this aggravation to it,

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that he could now have none of these resources in future to look forward to, which he had thus indiscreetly lavished. He had undermined his own support, and had now nothing but his own abilities to depend on for the recovery of what he had so wantonly thrown from him, an easy competence. Not discouraged, however, he determined to exert his best abilities, betook himself closely to the study of the law, and, after the customary time of probation at the Temple, being called to the bar, made no inconsiderable figure in Westminster Hall.

To the practice of the law Mr Fielding now applied himself with great assiduity, both in the courts at London, and on the circuits, so long as his health permitted; and it is probable would have risen to a considerable degree of eminence in it, had not the intemperances of his early parts of life put a check, by their consequences, to the progress of his success. In short, though but a young man, he began now to be molested with such violent attacks from the gout, as rendered it impossible for him to be as constant at the bar as the laboriousness of his profession required, and would only permit him to pursue the law by snatches, at such intervals as were free from indisposition. However, under these united severities of pain and want, he still found resources in his genius and abilities. He was concerned in a political periodical paper, called the *Champion*, which owed its principal support to his pen; a pen which seems never to have lain idle, since it was perpetually producing, almost as it were extempore, a play, a farce, a pamphlet, or a newspaper; but whose full exertion of power seemed reserved for a kind of writing different from, and indeed superior to them all; nor will it be necessary to say more in support of this assertion, than to mention his celebrated novels of *Joseph Andrews*, *Tom Jones*, and *Amelia*. But as this means of subsistence was evidently precarious, it was scarcely possible he should be enabled by it to recover his shattered fortunes: he was, therefore, at length obliged to accept

of the office of an acting magistrate in the Commission of the peace for the County of Middlesex; an office which seldom fails of being hateful to the populace, and, of course, liable to many infamous and unjust imputations, particularly that of venality; a charge which the ill-natured world, not unacquainted with Mr Fielding's want of oeconomy, and passion for expence, were but too ready to cast upon him. But the candid reader will recollect, that the charge of venality never ceases to be exhibited against abilities in distress, which was our Author's lot in the first stage of his life, and that the first magistrate for Westminster is ever liable to imputations. But it will be the more humane and generous office, to set down to the account of slander and defamation a great part of that abuse which was discharged against him by his enemies in his lifetime; deducing, however, from the whole, this useful lesson, *That quick and warm passions should be early controuled; and that dissipation and extravagant pleasures, are the most dangerous palliatives that can be found for disappointments and vexations in the first stages of life.*

Amidst these severe exercises of his understanding, however, and all the laborious duties of his office, his invention could not lie still; but he found leisure to amuse himself, and afterwards the world, with the History of *Tom Jones*. "If we consider this work," (says Mr Murphy), "in the same light in which the ablest critics have examined the *Iliad*, the *Æneid*, and the *Paradise Lost*, namely, with a view to the fable, the manners, the sentiments, and the stile, we shall find it standing the test of the severest criticism, and bearing away the envied praise of a complete performance. In the first place, the action has that unity, which is the boast of the great models of composition; it turns upon a single event, attended with many circumstances, and many subordinate incidents, which seem, in the progress of the work, to perplex, entangle, and involve the whole in difficulties, and lead on the reader's imagination, through scenes of prodigious variety, till the

Different intricacies and complications of the fable are explained, after the same gradual manner in which they had been worked up to a crisis: incident arises out of incident; the seeds of every thing that shoots up, are laid with a judicious hand, and whatever occurs in the latter part of the story, seems naturally to grow out of those passages which preceded; so that, upon the whole, the business, with great propriety and probability, works itself up into various embarrassments, and then, afterwards, by a regular series of events, clears itself from all impediments, and brings itself inevitably to a conclusion. By this artful management our Author has given us the perfection of fable; which, as the writers upon the subject have justly observed, consists in such obstacles to retard the final issue of the whole, as shall, at least, in their consequences, accelerate the catastrophe, and bring it evidently and necessarily to that period only, which, in the nature of things could arise from it; so that the action could not remain in suspense any longer, but must naturally close and determine itself. In short, all the characters down to Partridge, and even to a maid or an hostler at an inn, are drawn with truth and humour. They look, act, say, speak to our imaginations exactly as they appear to us in the world. The sentiments which they utter are peculiarly annexed to their habits, passions, and ideas, which is what poetical propriety requires; and, to the honour of our Author it must be said, that, whenever he addresses us in person, he is always in the interests of virtue and religion, and inspires, in a strain of moral reflection, a true love of goodness and honour, with a just detestation of imposture, hypocrisy, and all specious pretences to uprightness. And hence it arose, from this *truth of character* which prevails in *Tom Jones*, in conjunction with other qualities of the writer, that the suffrage of the most *learned* critic of this nation [Dr Warburton,] was given to our Author, when he says, “*Mons. de Marivaux in France, and Mr Fielding in England, stand the foremost among those who*

“have given a *faithful and chaste* copy of *life and manners*, and by enriching their romance with the “best part of the Comic art, may be said to have “brought it to perfection.” Such a favourable decision, from so able a judge, will do honour to Mr Fielding with posterity; and the excellent genius of the person with whom he has paralleled him, will reflect the truest praise on the author who was capable of being his illustrious rival.

Thus we have traced our Author in his progress, to the time when the vigour of his mind was in its full growth of perfection; from this period it sunk, but by slow degrees, into a decline. *Amelia*, which succeeded *Tom Jones* in about four years, has indeed the marks of genius, but of a genius beginning to fall into decay. The Author's invention still appears to retain its fertility, and his judgment seems as strong as ever; but the warmth of imagination is abated: in his landscapes, or scenes of life, Mr Fielding is no longer the colourist he was before. Yet *Amelia* holds the same proportion to *Tom Jones*, that the *Odyssey* of Homer bears, in the estimation of Longinus, to the *Iliad*. A fine vein of morality runs through the whole; many of the situations are affecting and tender; the sentiments are delicate: and, upon the whole, it is the *Odyssey*, the moral and pathetic work of Henry Fielding.

While he was planning and executing this piece, it should be remembered, that he was distracted by that multiplicity of avocations which surround a public magistrate; and his constitution, already greatly impaired and enfeebled, was now so entirely shattered by continual inroads of complicated disorders, that, by advice of his physicians, he was obliged to set out for Lisbon, to try if there was any restorative quality in the more genial air of that climate: but in two months after his arrival at that place, he yielded his last breath, in the year 1754, and in the forty-eighth year of his age — And thus was closed a course of disappointment, distress, vexation, infirmity, and study; for with each of

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these his life was variously chequered, and, perhaps, in stronger proportions than has been the lot of many.

He left behind him (for he married a second time) a wife and four children, three of which are still living, and now training up in a handsome course of education, under the care of their uncle.

Henry Fielding was in stature rather rising above six feet; his frame of body large, and remarkably robust, till the gout had broke the vigour of his constitution. His passions were, as the Poet expresses it, *tremblingly alive all o'er*. Whatever he desired, he desired ardently: he was alike impatient of disappointment or ill usage; and the same quickness of sensibility rendered him elate in prosperity, and overflowing with gratitude at every instance of generosity or friendship. Steady in his private attachments, his affection was warm, sincere and vehement: in his resentments he was manly, but temperate, seldom breaking out, in his writings, into gratifications of ill-humour or personal satire. It is to the honour of those whom he loved, that he had too much penetration to be deceived in their characters; and it was to the advantage of his enemies, that he was above passionate attacks upon them.—Open, unbounded, and social in his temper, he had no regard for money; but inclining to excess, even in his virtues, he carried his contempt of avarice into the opposite extreme, imprudence. When young in life, he suffered a moderate estate to be devoured by hospitality; and when in the decline of his days, and possessed of an income of near five hundred a-year, he knew no use of it, but to keep his table open to those who had been his friends when young, and had impaired their own fortunes. A sense of honour he had as lively and delicate as most men; but his passions were at times too turbulent for it, or rather his necessities were too pressing. Whenever he departed from delicacy, his friends know how his own feelings reprimanded him.

Upon the whole, (says his ingenious biographer, Mr Murphy), our Author was unhappy, but not vicious in his nature; in his understanding lively, yet solid; rich in invention, yet a lover of real science; an observer of mankind, yet a scholar of enlarged reading; a spirited enemy, yet an indefatigable friend; a satyrlist of vice and evil manners, yet a lover of mankind; an useful citizen; a polished and instructive wit; and a magistrate zealous for the order and welfare of the community which he served.

PROLOGUE.

Written by a FRIEND.

Spoken by Mr BRIDGWATER.

TOO long the slighted Comic Muse has mourn'd,
Her face quite alter'd, and her art o'erturn'd;
That force of nature now no more she sees,
With which so well ben Johnson knew to please;
No characters from nature now we trace;
All serve to empty books of common place.
Our modern bards, who to assemblies stray,
Frequent the park, the visit, or the play,
Regard not what fools do, but what wits say.
Just they retail each quibble to the town,
That surely must admire what is its own.
Thus, without characters from Nature got,
Without a moral, or without a plot,
A dull collection of insipid jokes,
Some stole from conversation, some from books;
Provided lords and ladies give 'em vent,
We call high Comedy, and seem content.
But to regale with other sort of fare,
To night our Author treats you with Moliere.
Moliere, who Nature's inmost secrets knew,
Whose justest pen like Kneller's pencil drew.
In whole strong scenes all characters are shewn,
Not by low jests, but actions of their own.
Happy our English bard, if your applause
Grant he's not injur'd the French author's cause;
From that alone arises all his fear;
He must be safe, if he has sav'd Moliere.

P R O L O G U E

Written by a T A I L O R

Dramatis Personæ.

LOVEGOLD, the Miser,
FREDERICK, his Son,
CLERMONT,
RAMILIE, Servant to Frederick,
Mr DECOY, a Broker,
Mr FURNISH, an Upholsterer,
Mr SPARKLE, a Jeweller,
Mr SATTIN, a Meteer,
Mr LIST, a Tailor,
CHA. BUBBLEBOY,
A LAWYER.

HARRIET, Daughter to Lovegold;
Mrs WISELY,
MARIANA,
LAPPET, Maid to Harriet,
WHEEDLE, Maid to Mariana,

Servants, &c.

SCENE, LONDON.

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THE
MISER.

ACT I. SCENE I.

Lovegold's House.

LAPPET, RAMILIE.

LAPPET.

I'LL hear no more. Perfidious fellow! have I for thee slighted so many good matches? have I for thee turn'd off Sir Oliver's steward, and my Lord Landy's butler, and several others, thy betters, and all to be affronted in so public a manner?

Ram. Do but hear me, Madam.

Lap. If thou wouldst have neglected me, was there nobody else to dance a minuet with but Mrs Susan Cross-stitch, whom you know to be my utter aversion?

Ram. Curse on all balls! henceforth I shall hate the sound of a violin.

Lap. I have more reason, I am sure, after having been the jest of the whole company: what must they think of me, when they see you, after I have countenanced your addresses in the eye of the world, taken out another lady before me?

Ram. I am sure the world must think worse of me, did they imagine, Madam, I could prefer any other to you.

Lap. None of your wheedling, Sir; that won't do. If you ever hope to speak to me more, let me see you affront the little minx in the next assembly you meet her.

Ram. I'll do it; and luckily, you know, we are to have a ball at my Lord Landy's the first night he lyes.

out of town, where I'll give your revenge ample satisfaction.

Lap. On that condition I pardon you this time; but if ever you do the like again——

Ram. May I be banish'd for ever from those dear eyes, and be turn'd out of the family while you live in it.

S C E N E II.

LAPPET, WHEEDLE, RAMILIE.

Wheed. Dear Mrs Lappet!

Lap. My dear, this is extremely kind.

Wheed. It is what all your acquaintance must do that expect to see you. It is in vain to hope for the favour of a visit.

Lap. Nay, dear creature, now you are barbarous; my young lady has staid at home so much, I have not had one moment to myself; the first time I had gone out, I am sure, Madam, would have been to wait on Mrs Wheedle.

Wheed. My lady has staid at home too pretty much lately. Oh! Mr Ramilie, are you confin'd too? your master does not stay at home, I am sure; he can find the way to our house, tho' you can't.

Ram. That is the only happiness, Madam, I envy him; but faith! I don't know how it is in this parliament time, one's whole days are so taken up in the court of Requests, and one's evenings at quadrille, the duce take me if I have seen one opera since I came to town. Oh! now I mention operas, if you have a mind to see Cato, I believe I can steal my master's silver ticket; for I know he is engaged to-morrow with some gentlemen who never leave their bottle for music.

Lap. Ah the savages!

Wheed. No one can say that of you, Mr. Ramilie; you prefer music to every thing——

Ram. ——But the ladies. [*Bell rings.*] So, there's my summons.

Lap. Well, but shall we never have a party of quadrille more?

Act I. The MISER. 27

Wheed. O, don't name it. I have worked my eyes out since I saw you; for my lady has taken a whim of flourishing all her old cambric pinnors and handkerchiefs; in short, my dear, no journey-woman sempstress is half so much a slave as I am.

Lap. Why do you stay with her?

Wheed. Lay, Child, where can one better one's self? all the ladies of our acquaintance are just the same. Besides, there are some little things that make amends; my lady has a whole train of admirers.

Ram. That, Madam, is the only circumstance where in she has the honour of resembling you. [*Bell rings louder.*] You hear, Madam, I am obliged to leave you — [*Bell rings.*] So, so, so, would the bell were in your guts!

SCENE III.

LAPPET, WHEEDLE.

Lap. Oh! Wheedle! I am quite sick of this family; the old gentleman grows more covetous every day he lives. Every thing is under lock and key; I can scarce ask you to eat or drink.

Wheed. Thank you, my dear; but I have drank half a dozen dishes of chocolate already this morning.

Lap. Well, but, my dear, I have a whole budget of news to tell you. I have made some notable discoveries.

Wheed. Pray let us hear them. I have some secrets of our family too, which you shall know by and by. What a pleasure there is in having a friend to tell these things to!

Lap. You know, my dear, last summer my young lady had the misfortune to be overset in a boat between Richmond and Twickenham, and that a certain young gentleman, plunging immediately into the water, sav'd her life at the hazard of his own — Oh! I shall never forget the figure she made at her return home, so wet, so draggled — ha, ha, ha!

Wheed. Yes, my dear, I know how all your fine ladies look when they are never so little disordered — they have no need to be so vain of themselves.

Lap. You are no stranger to my master's way of rewarding people; when the poor gentleman brought Miss home, my master meets them at the door, and, without asking any question, very civilly shuts it against him. Well, for a whole fortnight afterwards I was continually entertained with the young spark's bravery, and gallantry, and generosity, and beauty.

Wheed. I can easily guess; I suppose she was rather warm'd than cool'd by the water. These mistresses of ours, for all their pride, are made of just the same flesh and blood as we are.

Lap. About a month ago my young lady goes to the play in an undress, and takes me with her. We sat in Burton's box, where, as the devil would have it, whom should we meet with but this very gentleman: her blushes soon discover'd to me who he was: in short, the gentleman entertained her the whole play, and I much mistake if ever she was so agreeably entertained in her life. Well, as we are going out, a rude fellow thrusts his hand into my lady's bosom; upon which her champion fell upon him, and did so maul him—My lady fainted away in my arms; but as soon as she came to herself—had you seen how she looked on him. Ah! Sir, says she, in a mighty pretty tone, sure you were born for my deliverance. He handed her into a hackney-coach, and set us down at home. From this moment letters began to fly on both sides.

Wheed. And you take care to see the post paid, I hope?

Lap. Never fear that—And now what do you think we have contrived among us? we have got this very gentleman into the house in the quality of my master's clerk.

Wheed. Soh! here's fine billing and cooing, I warrant; Miss is in a fine condition.

Lap. Her condition is pretty much as it was yet. How long it will continue so, I know not. I am making up my matters as fast as I can; for this house holds not me after the discovery.

Wheed. I think you have no great reason to lament the loss of a place where the master keeps his own keys.

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Lap. The devil take the first inventor of locks, say I. But come, my dear, there is one key which I keep; and that, I believe, will furnish us with some sweet-meats; so if you will walk in with me, I'll tell you a secret which concerns your family. It is in your power, perhaps, to be serviceable to me; I hope, my dear, you will keep these secrets safe; for one would not have it known that one publishes all the affairs of a family, while one stays in it. *[Exeunt.]*

S C E N E IV.

A Garden.

CLERMONT, HARRIET.

Cler. Why are you melancholy, my dear Harriet? do you repent that promise of yours, which has made me the happiest of mankind?

Har. You little know my heart, if you can think it capable of repenting any thing I have done towards your happiness: if I am melancholy, it is that I have it not in my power to make you as happy as I would.

Cler. Thou art too bounteous. Every tender word, from those dear lips, lays obligations on me I never can repay: but if to love, to doat on you more than life itself, to watch your eyes that I may obey your wishes before you speak them, can discharge me from any part of that vast debt I owe you, I will be punctual in the payment.

Har. It were ungenerous in me to doubt you; and when I think what you have done for me, believe me, I must think the balance on your side.

Cler. Generous creature! and dost thou not for me hazard the eternal anger of your father, the reproaches of your family, the censures of the world, who always blame the conduct of that person who sacrifices interest to any consideration.

Har. As for the censures of the world, I despise them while I do not deserve them: folly is forwarder to censure wisdom, than wisdom folly. I were weak indeed not to embrace real happiness, because the world does not call it so.

Clar. But see, my dearest, your brother is come into the garden.

Har. Is it not safe, think you, to let him into our secret?

Clar. You know, by outwardly humouring your father, in railing against the extravagance of young men, I have brought him to look on me as his enemy: it will be first proper to set him right in that point. Besides, in managing the old gentleman, I shall still be obliged to a behaviour which the impatience of his temper may not bear; therefore I think it not advisable to trust him, at least yet.—He will observe us. Adieu, my heart's only joy.

Har. Honest creature! what happiness may I propose in a life with such a husband? what is there in grandeur to recompence the loss of him! Parents chuse as often ill for us, as we for ourselves. They are too apt to forget how seldom true happiness lives in a palace, or rides in a coach and six.

S C E N E V.

FREDERICK, HARRIET.

Fred. Dear Harriet, good-morrow. I am glad to find you alone; for I have an affair to impart to you, that I am ready to burst with.

Har. You know, brother, I am a trusty confident.

Fred. As ever wore petticoats. But this is an affair of such consequence—

Har. Or it were not worth your telling me.

Fred. Nor your telling again; in short you never could discover it, I could afford you ten years to guess it in. I am—you will laugh immoderately when you know it. I am—it is impossible to tell you. In a word—I am in love.

Har. In love!

Fred. Violently, to distraction; so much in love, that without more hopes than I at present see any possibility of obtaining, I cannot live three days.

Har. And has this violent distemper, pray, come upon you of a sudden?

Fred. No, I have bred it a long time. It hath been growing these several weeks, I lifted it as long as I could: but it is now come to a crisis, and I must either have the woman, or you will have no brother.

Har. But who is this woman? for you have conceal'd it so well, that I can't even guess.

Fred. In the first place, she is a most intolerable coquette.

Har. That is a description I shall never find her out by. There are so many of her sisters, you might as well tell me the colour of her complexion.

Fred. Secondly, she is almost eternally at cards.

Har. You must come to particulars. I shall never discover your mistress till you tell me more than that she is a woman, and lives in this town.

Fred. Her fortune is very small.

Har. I find you are enumerating her charms.

Fred. Oh! I have only shewn you the reverse; but were you to behold the medal on the right side, you would see beauty, wit, genteelness, politeness—in a word, you would see Mariana.

Har. Mariana! ha, ha, ha! you have started a wild-goose chase, indeed. But, if you could ever prevail on her, you may depend on it, it is an arrant impossibility to prevail on my father; and you may easily imagine what success a disinherited son may likely expect with a woman of her temper.

Fred. I know 'tis difficult, but nothing's impossible to love, at least nothing's impossible to woman; and therefore, if you and the ingenious Mrs Lappet will but lay your heads together in my favour, I shall be far from despairing; and in return, sister, for this kindness—

Har. And in return, brother, for this kindness, you may perhaps have it in your power to do me a favour of pretty much the same nature.

Love. without.] Rogue! villain!

Har. Soh! what's the matter now? what can have thrown my father into this passion?

Fred. The loss of an old slipper, I suppose, or some-

thing of equal consequence. Let us step aside into the next walk, and talk more of our affairs.

SCENE VI.

LOVEGOLD, RAMILIE.

Love. Answer me not, sirrah; but get you out of my house.

Ram. Sir, I am your son's servant, and not yours, Sir; and I won't go out of the house, Sir, unless I am turn'd out by my proper master, Sir.

Love. Sirrah, I'll turn your master out after you, like an extravagant rascal as he is; he has no need of a servant while he is in my house; and here he dresses out a fellow at more expence than a prudent man might clothe a large family at: it's plain enough what use he keeps you for; but I will have no spy upon my affairs, no rascal continually prying into all my actions, devouring all I have, and hunting about in every corner to see what he may steal.

Ram. Steal! a likely thing, indeed, to steal from a man who locks up every thing he has, and stands sentry upon it day and night.

Love. I'm all over in a sweat, lest this fellow should suspect something of my money. [*Aside.*] Harkee, rascal, come hither, I wou'd advise thee not to run about the town, and tell every body you meet that I have money hid.

Ram. Why, have you any money hid, Sir?

Love. No, sirrah, I don't say I have; but you may raise such a report, nevertheless.

Ram. 'Tis equal to me, whether you have money hid or no, since I cannot find it.

Love. D'ye mutter, sirrah? get you out of my house, I say, get you out this instant.

Ram. Well, Sir, I am going.

Love. Come back; let me desire you to carry nothing away with you.

Ram. What should I carry?

Love. That's what I wou'd see. These boot-sleeves were certainly intended to be the receivers of stolen goods, and I wish the tailor had been hang'd who invented them. Turn your pockets inside out, if you please; but you are too practis'd a rogue to put any thing there. These damn'd bags have had many a good thing in them, I warrant you.

Ram. Give me my bag, Sir, I am in the most danger of being robb'd.

Love. Come, come, be honest, and return what thou hast taken from me.

Ram. Ay, Sir, that I could do with all my heart, for I have taken nothing from you but some boxes on the ear.

Love. And hast thou really stolen nothing?

Ram. No, really, Sir.

Love. Then go out of my house while 'tis all well, and go to the devil.

Ram. Ay, any where from such an old covetous curmudgeon. [Exit Ram.]

Love. So, there's one plague gone: now I will go pay a visit to the dear casket.

S C E N E VII.

LOVEGOLD, FREDERICK, HARRIET.

Love. In short, I must find some safer place to deposit those three thousand guineas in, which I received yesterday: three thousand guineas are a sum—O Heavens! I have betray'd myself! my passion has transported me to talk aloud, and I have been overheard. How now! what's the matter?

Fred. The matter, Sir?

Love. Yes, the matter, Sir; I suppose you can repeat more of my words than these; I suppose you have overheard—

Fred. What, Sir?

Love. That—

Fred. Sir?

Love. What I was just now saying.

Har. Pardon me, Sir, we really did not.

Love. Well, I see you did overhear something, and so I will tell you the whole: I was saying to myself, in this great scarcity of money, what a happiness it would be to have three thousand guineas by one. I tell you this, that you might not misunderstand me, and imagine that I said I had three thousand guineas!

Fred. We enter not into your affairs, Sir.

Love. Ah! wou'd I had those three thousand guineas!

Fred. In my opinion—

Love. It would make my affairs extremely easy.

Fred. Then it is very easily in your power to raise them, Sir, that the world knows.

Love. I raise them! I raise three thousand guineas easily! my children are my greatest enemies, and will, by their way of talking, and by the extravagant expences they run into, be the occasion that one of these days somebody will cut my throat, imagining me to be made up of nothing but guineas.

Fred. What expence, Sir, do I run into?

Love. How! have you the assurance to ask me that, Sir? when if one was but to pick those fine feathers of yours off, from head to foot, one might purchase a very comfortable annuity out of them: a fellow, here, with a very good fortune upon his back, wonders that he is called extravagant. In short, Sir, you must rob me to appear in this manner.

Fred. How, Sir! rob you?

Love. Ay, rob me: or how cou'd you support this extravagance?

Fred. Alas, Sir, there are fifty young fellows of my acquaintance that support greater extravagancies, and no one knows how. Ah, Sir, there are ten thousand pretty ways of living in this town, without robbing one's father.

Love. What necessity is there for all that lace on your coat? and all bought at the first hand rob, I warrant you. If you will be fine, is there not such a place as Monmouth-street in this town, where a man may buy a suit for the third part of the sum which his tailor de-

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mands? And then, periwigs! what need has a man of periwigs, when he may wear his own hair? I dare swear a good periwig can't cost less, then fifteen or twenty shillings. Heyday! what, are they making signs to one another which shall pick my pocket?

Har. My brother and I, Sir, are disputing which shall speak to you first, for we have both an affair of consequence to mention to you.

Love. And I have an affair of consequence to mention to you both. Pray, son, you who are a fine gentleman, and converse much amongst the ladies, what think you of a certain young lady called Mariana?

Fred. Mariana, Sir!

Love. Ay, what do you think of her?

Fred. Think of her, Sir!

Love. Why do you repeat my words? Ay, what do you think of her?

Fred. Why, I think her the most charming woman in the world.

Love. Would she not be a desirable match?

Fred. So desirable, that, in my opinion, her husband will be the happiest of mankind.

Love. Does she not promise to make a good housewife?

Fred. Oh! the best housewife upon earth.

Love. Might not a husband, think ye, live very easy and happy with her?

Fred. Doubtless, Sir.

Love. There is one thing I am a little afraid of, that is, that she has not quite so much fortune as one might fairly expect.

Fred. Oh, Sir! consider her merit, and you may easily make an abatement in her fortune. For Heaven's sake, Sir, don't let that prevent your design. Fortune is nothing in comparison with her beauty and merit.

Love. Pardon me there. However, there may be some matters found, perhaps, to make up some little deficiency; and if you would, to oblige your father, retrench your extravagancies on this occasion, perhaps the difference, in some time, might be made up.

Fred. My dearest father, I'll bid adieu to all extravagance for ever.

Love. Thou art a dutiful, good boy; and since I find you have the same sentiments with me, provided she can but make out a pretty tolerable fortune, I am ev'n resolv'd to marry her.

Fred. Ha! you are resolv'd to marry Mariana?

Love. Ay, to marry Mariana.

Har. Who, you, you, you?

Love. Yes, I, I, I.

Fred. I beg you will pardon me, Sir; a sudden dizziness has seiz'd me, and I must beg leave to retire.

S C E N E VIII.

LOVEGOLD, HARRIET.

Love. This daughter, is what I have resolv'd for myself: as for your brother, I have a certain widow in my eye for him: and you, my dear, shall marry our good neighbour, Mr Spindle.

Har. I marry Mr Spindle!

Love. Yes; he is a prudent, wise man, not much above fifty, and has a great fortune in the funds.

Har. I thank you, my dear Papa, but I had rather not marry him, if you please. [*Curtsy.*]

Love. *mimicking her curtsy.* I thank you, my good daughter, but I had rather you shou'd marry him, if you please.

Har. Pardon me, dear Sir.

Love. Pardon me, dear Madam.

Har. Not all the fathers upon earth shall force me to it.

Love. Did ever mortal hear a girl talk in this manner to her father?

Har. Did ever father attempt to marry his daughter after such a manner? In short, Sir, I have ever been obedient to you; but as this affair concerns my happiness only, and not yours, I hope you will give me leave to consult my own inclination.

Love. I won'd not have you provoke me; I am resolv'd upon the match.

'S C E N E IX.

LOVEGOLD, CLERMONT, HARRIET.

Cler. Some people, Sir, upon justice-business, desire to speak with your Worship.

Love. I can attend to no business, this girl has so perplex'd me. Hussy, you shall marry as I wou'd have you, or—

Cler. Forgive my interposing: dear Sir, what's the matter? Madam, let me entreat you not to put your father into a passion.

Love. Clermont, you are a prudent young fellow. Here's a baggage of a daughter, who refuses the most advantageous match that ever was offer'd, both to her and to me. A man of a vast estate offers to take her without a portion!

Cler. Without a portion! Consider, dear Madam, can you refuse a gentleman who offers to take you without a portion?

Love. Ay, consider what that saves your father.

Har. Yes, but I consider what I am to suffer.

Cler. That's true, indeed; you will think on that, Sir. Tho' money be the first thing to be considered in all affairs of life, yet some little regard should be had in this case to inclination.

Love. Without a portion!

Cler. You are in the right, Sir; that decides the thing at once: and yet, I know there are people who, on this occasion, object against a disparity of age and temper, which too often make the married state utterly miserable.

Love. Without a portion!

Cler. Ah! there is no answering that.—Who can oppose such a reason as that? And yet there are several parents, who study the inclinations of their children more than any other thing, that would by no means sacrifice them to interest; and who esteem, as the very

first article of marriage, that happy union of affections, which is the foundation of every blessing attending on a married state—and who—

Love. Without a portion!

Cler. Very true; that stops your mouth at once— Without a portion! Where is the person who can find an argument against that?

Love. Ha! is not that the barking of a dog? Some villains are in search of my money.— Don't stir from hence; I'll return in an instant.

Cler. My dearest Harriet, how shall I express the agony I am in on your account?

Har. Be not too much alarm'd, since you may depend on my resolution. It may be in the power of Fortune to delay our happiness, but no power shall force me to destroy your hopes by any other match.

Cler. Thou kindest, lovely creature!

Love. Thank Heaven it was nothing but my fear.

Cler. Yes, a daughter must obey her father; he is not to consider the shape, or the air, or the age of a husband: but when a man offers to take her without a portion, she is to have him, let him be what he will.

Love. Admirably well said, indeed.

Cler. Madam, I ask your pardon if my love for yourself and your family carries me a little too far. Be under no concern, I dare swear I shall bring her to it.

[To Love.

Love. Do, do; I'll go in, and see what these people want with me. Give her a little more now, while she's warm; you will be time enough to draw the warrant.

Cler. When a lover offers, Madam, to take a daughter without a portion, one should inquire no farther; every thing is contained in that one article; and without a portion, supplies the want of beauty, youth, family, wisdom, honour, and honesty.

Love. Gloriously said! spoke like an oracle! [Exit

Cler. So, once more we are alone together. Believe me, this is a most painful hypocrisy; it tortures me to oppose your opinion, though I am not in earnest, nor suspected by you of being so. Oh, Harriet! how is the

noble passion of love abus'd by vulgar souls, who are incapable of tasting its delicacies. When love is great as mine,

None can its pleasures, or its pains declare;

We can but feel how exquisite they are. *[Exeunt.]*

ACT II. SCENE I.

SCENE continues.

FREDERICK, RAMILIE.

FREDERICK.

WHAT is the reason, sirrah, you have been out of the way, when I gave you orders to stay here?

Ram. Yes, Sir, and here did I stay, according to your orders, till your good father turn'd me out; and it is, Sir, at the extreme hazard of a cudgel that I return back again.

Fred. Well, Sir, and what answer have you brought touching the money?

Ram. Ah, Sir! it is a terrible thing to borrow money; a man must have dealt with the devil to deal with a scrivener.

Fred. Then it won't do, I suppose.

Ram. Pardon me, Sir: Mr Decoy, the broker, is a most industrious person; he says he has done every thing in his power to serve you; for he has taken a particular fancy to your honour.

Fred. So then, I shall have the five hundred, shall I?

Ram. Yes, Sir; but there are some trifling conditions which your Honour must submit to before the affair can be finish'd.

Fred. Did he bring you to the speech of the person that is to lend the money?

Ram. Ah, Sir! things are not managed in that manner; he takes more care to conceal himself than you do; there are greater mysteries in these matters than

you imagine. Why, he would not so much as tell me the lender's name; and he is to bring him to-day to talk with you, in some third person's house, to learn from your own mouth the particulars of your estate and family: I dare swear the very name of your father will make all things easy.

Fred. Chiefly the death of my mother, whose jointure no one can hinder me of.

Ram. Here, Sir, I have brought the articles: Mr Decoy told me, he took them from the mouth of the person himself. Your Honour will find them extremely reasonable—The broker was forc'd to stickle hard to get such good ones. In the first place, the lender is to see all his securities; and the borrower must be of age, and heir-apparent to a large estate, without flaw in the title, and entirely free from all incumbrance; and that the lender may run as little risk as possible, the borrower must ensure his life for the sum lent; if he be an officer in the army, he is to make over his whole pay, for the payment of both principal and interest, which, that the lender may not burden his conscience with any scruples, is to be no more than 30 per cent.

Fred. Oh, the conscientious rascal!

Ram. But, as the said lender has not by him, at present, the sum demanded; and that, to oblige the borrower, he is himself forc'd to borrow of another, at the rate of 4 per cent. he thinks it but reasonable that the first borrower, over and above the 30 per cent. afore-said, shall also pay this 4 per cent. since it is for his service only that the sum is borrowed.

Fred. Oh the devil! What a Jew is here!

Ram. You know, Sir, what you have to do—he can't oblige you to these terms.

Fred. Nor can I oblige him to lend me the money without them; and you know that I must have it, let the conditions be what they will.

Ram. Ay, Sir, why that was what I told him.

Fred. Did you so, rascal? No wonder he insists on such conditions, if you laid open my necessities to him.

Ram. Alas, Sir! I only told it to the broker, who is your friend, and has your interest very much at heart.

Fred. Well, is this all; or are there any more reasonable articles?

Ram. Of the five hundred pounds required, the lender can pay down, in cash, no more than four hundred; and for the rest, the borrower must take in goods; of which here follows the catalogue.

Fred. What, in the devil's name, is the meaning of all this?

Ram. *Imprimis*, One large yellow camlet bed, lined with satin, very little eaten by the moths, and wanting only one curtain. Six stuff'd chairs of the same, a little torn, and the frames worm-eaten, otherwise not in the least the worse for wearing. One large pier-glass, with only one crack in the middle. One suit of tapestry hangings, in which are curiously wrought the loves of Mars and Venus, Venus and Adonis, Cupid and Psyche, with many other amorous stories, which make the hangings very proper for a bed-chamber.

Fred. What the devil is here!

Ram. *Item*, One suit of druggert, with silver buttons, the buttons only the worse for wearing. *Item*, Two muskets, one of which only wants the lock. One large silver watch, with Tompion's name to it. One snuff-box, with a picture in it, bought at Mr Deard's; a proper present for a mistress. Five pictures without frames; if not originals, all copies by good hands: and one fine frame without a picture.

Fred. Oons! what use have I for all this!

Ram. Several valuable books; amongst which are all the Journals printed for these five years last past, handsomely bound and letter'd. — The whole works in divinity of —

Fred. Read no more: confound the curs'd extortioner: I shall pay 100 per cent.

Ram. Ah, Sir! I with your Honour would consider of it in time.

Fred. I must have money. To what straits are we reduc'd by the curs'd avarice of fathers! Well may we

with them dead, when their death is the only introduction to our living.

Ram. Such a father as yours, Sir, is enough to make one do something more than with him dead. For my part, I have never had any inclinations towards hanging; and, I thank Heaven, I have lived to see whole sets of my companions swing out of the world, while I have had address enough to quit all manner of gallantries the moment I smelt the halter: I have always had an utter aversion to the smell of hemp; but this rogue of a father of yours, Sir—Sir, I ask your pardon—has so provok'd me, that I have often wish'd to rob him, and rob him I shall in the end, that's certain.

Fred. Give me that paper, that I may consider a little these moderate articles.

S C E N E II.

LOVEGOLD, DECOY, RAMILIE, FREDERICK.

Dec. In short, Sir, he is a very extravagant young fellow, and so pressed by his necessities, that you may bring him to what terms you please.

Love. But do you think, Mr. Decoy, there is no danger? Do you know the name, the family, and the estate of the borrower?

Dec. No, I cannot give you any perfect information yet, for it was by the greatest accident in the world that he was recommended to me; but you will learn all these from his own lips, and his man assur'd me you wou'd make no difficulty the moment you knew the name of his father: all that I can tell you is, that his servant says the old gentleman is extremely rich; he call'd him a covetous old rascal.

Love. Ay, that is the name which these spendthrifts, and the rogues their servants, give to all honest prudent men, who know the world, and the value of their money.

Dec. This young gentleman is an only son, and is so

little afraid of any future competitors, that he offers to be bound, if you insist on it, that his father shall die within these eight months.

Love. Ay, there's something in that; I believe then I shall let him have the money. Charity, Mr Decoy, charity obliges us to serve our neighbour, I say, when we are no losers by so doing.

Dec. Very true, indeed.

Ram. Heyday! what can be the meaning of this? our broker talking with the old gentleman?

Dec. So, Gentlemen! I see you are in a great haste: but who told you, pray, that this was the lender? I assure you, Sir, I neither discover'd your name, nor your house: but, however, there is no great harm done, they are people of discretion, so you may freely transact the affair now.

Love. How!

Dec. This, Sir, is the gentleman that wants to borrow the five hundred pounds I mentioned to you.

Love. How! rascal, is it you that abandon yourself to these intolerable extravagancies?

Fred. I must even stand buff, and outface him.

[*Aside.*

—And is it you, father, that disgrace yourself by these scandalous extortions? [*Ram. and Dec. sneak off.*

Love. Is it you that would ruin yourself, by taking up money at such interest?

Fred. Is it you that would enrich yourself, by lending at such interest?

Love. How dare you, after this, appear before my face?

Fred. How dare you, after this, appear before the face of the world?

Love. Get you out of my sight, villain; get out of my sight.

Fred. Sir, I go; but give me leave to say——

Love. I'll not hear a word. I'll prevent your attempting any thing of this nature for the future. Get out of my sight, villain.—I am not sorry for this ac-

cident ; it will make me, henceforth, keep a strict eye over his actions. [Exeunt.

S C E N E III.

SCENE, *an Apartment in LOVEGOLD's house.*

HARRIET, MARIANA.

Mar. Nay, Harriet, you must excuse me ; for of all people upon earth you are my greatest favourite ; but I have had such an intolerable cold, child, that it is a miracle I have recovered ; for, my dear, wou'd you think I have had no less than three doctors ?

Har. Nay, then, it is a miracle you recover'd, indeed.

Mar. Oh, child ! doctors will never do me any harm ; I never take any thing they prescribe : I don't know how it is, when one's ill, one can't help sending for them ; and you know, my dear, my mamma loves physic better than she does any thing but cards.

Har. Were I to take as much of cards as you do, I don't know which I should nauseate most.

Mar. Oh, child ! you are quite a tramontane : I must bring you to like dear spadille. I protest, Harriet, if you wou'd take my advice in some things, you wou'd be the most agreeable creature in the world.

Har. Nay, my dear, I am in a fair way of being obliged to obey your commands.

Mar. That would be the happiest thing in the world for you ; and I dare swear you would like them extremely, for they wou'd be exactly opposite to every command of your father's.

Har. By that now, one would think you were married already.

Mar. Married, my dear !

Har. Oh, I can tell you of such a conquest ! you will have such a lover within these four-and-twenty hours !

Mar. I am glad you have given me timely notice of it, that I may turn off somebody to make room for him ;

but I believe I have list'd him already. Oh, Harriet! I have been so plagu'd, so pester'd, so fatigu'd, since I saw you, with that dear creature, your brother——In short, child, he has made arrant downright love to me: if my heart had not been harder than adamant itself, I had been your sister by this time.

Har. And if your heart be not harder than adamant, you will be in a fair way of being my mother shortly; for my good father has this very day declar'd such a passion for you——

Mar. Your father!

Har. Ay, my dear. What say you to a comely old gentleman of not much above threescore, that loves you so violently? I dare swear he will be constant to you all his days.

Mar. Ha, ha, ha! I shall die. Ha, ha, ha! You extravagant creature, how could you throw away all this jest at once? it would have furnished a prudent person with an annuity of laughter for life. Oh! I am charm'd with my conquest; I am quite in love with him already. I never had a lover yet above half his age.

Har. Lappet and I have laid a delightful plot, if you will but come into it, and counterfeit an affection for him.

Mar. Why, child, I have a real affection for him. Oh! methinks I see you on your knees already——Pray, Mamma, please to give me your blessing. Oh! I see my loving bridegroom in his threefold night-cap, his flannel shirt; methinks I see him approach me with all the lovely gravity of age; I hear him whisper charming sentences of morality in my ear, more instructive than all my grandmother ever taught me. Oh! I smell him sweeter, oh, sweeter than even hartshorn itself! Ha, ha, ha! see, child, how beautiful a fond imagination can paint a lover: would not any one think now we had been a happy couple together, Heaven knows how long?

Har. Well, you dear mad creature, but do you think you can maintain any of this fondness to his face? for

I know some women, who speak very fondly of a husband to other people, but never say one civil thing to the man himself.

Mar. Oh, never fear it! one can't indeed bring one's self to be civil to a young lover; but as for these old fellows, I think one may play as harmlessly with them as with one another. Young fellows are perfect bears, and must be kept at a distance; the old ones are mere lapdogs, and when they have agreeable tricks with them, one is equally fond of both.

Har. Well, but now I hope you will give me leave to speak a word or two seriously in favour of my poor brother.

Mar. Oh! I shall hate you if you are serious! Ah, see what your wicked words have occasioned; I protest you are a conjurer, and certainly deal with the devil.

S C E N E IV.

FREDERICK, MARIANA, HARRIET.

Har. Oh, brother! I am glad you are come to plead your own cause: I have been your solicitor in your absence.

Fred. I am afraid, like other clients, I shall plead much worse for myself than my advocate has done.

Mar. Persons who have a bad cause, should have very artful counsel.

Fred. When the judge is determined against us, all art will prove of no effect.

Mar. Why then, truly, Sir, in so terrible a situation, I think the sooner you give up the cause the better.

Fred. No, Madam, I am resolv'd to persevere; for, when one's whole happiness is already at stake, I see nothing more can be hazarded in the pursuit. It might be, perhaps, a person's interest to give up a cause, wherein part of his fortune was concern'd; but, when the dispute is about the whole, he can never lose by persevering.

Mar. Do you hear him, Harriet? I fancy this bro-

ther of yours would have made a most excellent lawyer. I protest, when he is my son-in-law, I'll even send him to the Temple: though he begins a little late, yet diligence may bring him to be a great man.

Fred. I hope, Madam, diligence may succeed in love as well as law; sure, Mariana is not a more crabbed study than Coke upon Littleton?

Mar. Oh, the wretch! he has quite suffocated me with his comparison: I must have a little air: dear Harriet, let us walk in the garden.

Fred. I hope, Madam, I have your leave to attend you?

Mar. My leave! no, indeed, you have no leave of mine: but if you will follow me, I know no way to hinder you.

Har. Ah, brother, I wish you had no greater enemy in this affair than your mistress.

S C E N E V.

RAMILIE, LAPPET.

Lap. This was indeed a most unlucky accident; however, I dare lay a wager I shall succeed better with him, and get some of those guineas you would have borrowed.

Ram. I am not, Madam, now to learn Mrs Lapper's dexterity; but if you get any thing out of him, I shall think you a match for the devil. Sooner than to extract gold from him, I would engage to extract religion from a hypocrite, honesty from a lawyer, health from a physician, sincerity from a courtier, or modesty from a poet. I think, my dear, you have lived long enough in this house to know that gold is a very dear commodity here.

Lap. Ah! but there are some certain services which will squeeze it out of the closest hands; there is one trade which, I thank Heaven, I am no stranger to, wherein all men are dabblers; and he who will scarce afford himself either meat or cloaths, will still pay for the commodities I deal in.

Ram. Your humble servant, Madam; I find you don't know our good master yet: there is not a woman in the world who loves to hear her pretty self talk never so much, but you may easier shut her mouth than open his hands: as for thanks, praises, and promises, no courtier on earth is more liberal of them; but for money, the devil a penny: there's nothing so dry as his caresses; and there is no husband, who hates the word Wife half so much as he does the word Give; instead of saying I give you a good-morrow, he always says, I lend you a good morrow.

Lap. Ah! Sir, let me alone to drain a man; I have the secret to open his heart and his purse too.

Ram. I defy you to drain the man we talk of, of his money; he loves that more than any thing you can procure him in exchange; the very sight of a dun throws him into convulsions; 'tis touching him in the only sensible part; 'tis piercing his heart, tearing out his vitals, to ask him for a farthing. But here he is, and if you get a shilling out of him, I'll marry you without any other fortune.

S C E N E VI.

LOVEGOLD, LAPPET.

Love. All's well hitherto; my dear money is safe. Is it you, Lappet?

Lap. I shou'd rather ask if it be you, Sir; why, you look so young and vigorous——

Love. Do I, do I?

Lap. Why, you grow younger and younger every day, Sir; you never look'd half so young in your life, Sir, as you do now. Why, Sir, I know fifty young fellows of five and twenty, that are older than you are.

Love. That may be, that may be, Lappet, considering the lives they lead; and yet I am a good ten years above fifty.

Lap. Well, and what's ten years above fifty? 'tis the very flower of a man's age. Why, Sir, you are now in the very prime of your life,

Love. Very true, that's very true, as to understanding; but I am afraid, could I take off twenty years; it would do me no harm with the ladies, Lappet. How goes on our affair with Mariana? have you mentioned any thing about what her mother can give her? for, now-a-days, no body marries a woman unless she bring something with her besides a petticoat.

Lap. Sir! why, Sir, this young lady will be worth to you as good a thousand pound a year as ever was told.

Love. How, a thousand pound a year!

Lap. Yes, Sir: there's in the first place the article of a table, she has a very little stomach, she does not eat above an ounce in a fortnight; and then as to the quality of what she eats, you'll have no need of a French cook upon her account; as for sweetmeats, she mortally hates them: so there is the article of deserts wiped off all at once.—You'll have no need of a confectioner, who would be eternally bringing in bills for preserves, conserves, biscakes, comfits, and jellies; of which half a dozen ladies would swallow you ten pounds worth at a meal: this, I think, we may very moderately reckon at two hundred pounds a year at least. Item, for cloaths, she has been bred up at such a plainness in them, that should we allow but for three birth-night suits a year saved, which are the least a town lady would expect, there go a good two hundred pounds a year more. For jewels (of which she hates the very sight) the yearly interest of what you must lay out on them would amount to one hundred pounds. Lastly, she has an utter detestation for play, at which I have known several moderate ladies lose a good two thousand pounds a year: now let us take only the fourth part of that, which amounts to five hundred; to which, if we add two hundred pounds on the table account, two hundred pounds in cloaths, and one hundred pounds in jewels, there is, Sir, your thousand pounds a year in hard money.

Love. Ay, ay, these are pretty things, it must be confess'd, very pretty things; but there's nothing real in 'em.

Lap. How, Sir, is it not something real to bring you in marriage a vast store of sobriety, the inheritance of a great love for simplicity of dress, and a vast acquired fund of hatred for play.

Love. This is downright raillery, Lappet, to make me up a fortune out of the expences she won't put me to; I assure you, Madam, I shall give no acquittance for what I have not receiv'd: in short, Lappet, I must touch, touch, touch, something real.

Lap. Never fear, you shall touch something real: I have heard them talk of a certain country, where she has a very pretty freehold, which shall be put into your hands.

Love. Nay, if it were a copyhold I should be glad to touch it. But there is another thing that disturbs me. You know this girl is young, and young people generally love one another's company: it would ill agree with a person of my temper to keep an assembly for all the young rakes and flaunting girls in the town.

Lap. Ah, Sir, how little do you know of her! this is another particularity that I had to tell you of; she has a most terrible aversion for all young people, and loves none but persons of your years. I wou'd advise you, above all things, to take care not to appear too young: She insists on sixty at least. She says, that fifty-six years are not able to content her.

Love. This humour is a little strange, methinks.

Lap. She carries it farther, Sir, than can be imagined: she has in her chamber several pictures; but what do you think they are? none of your smockfac'd young fellows, your Adonises, your Cephaluses, your Parises, and your Apolles. No, Sir, you see nothing there but your handsome figures of Saturn, King Priam, old Nestor, and good father Anchises upon his son's shoulders.

Love. Admirable! this is more than I could have hoped. To say the truth, had I been a woman, I should never have loved young fellows.

Lap. I believe you. Pretty sort of stuff, indeed, to be in love with your young fellows! pretty masters, indeed, with their fine complexions, and their fine sea-

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thers! Now, I should be glad to taste the favour that is in any of them.

Love. And do you really think me pretty tolerable?

Lap. Tolerable! you are ravishing! If your picture was drawn by a good hand, Sir, it would be invaluable! turn about a little, if you please: there, what can be more charming? Let me see you walk: there's a person for you, tall, straight, free and degagee! Why, Sir, you have no fault about you.

Love. Not many; hem, hem; not many, I thank Heaven; only a few rheumatic pains now and then, and a small catarrhe that seizes me sometimes.

Lap. Ah, Sir, that's nothing; your catarrhe sits very well upon you, and you cough with a very good grace.

Love. But tell me, what does Mariana say of my person?

Lap. She has a particular pleasure in talking of it; and I assure you, Sir, I have not been backward, on all such occasions, to blazon forth your merit, and to make her sensible how advantageous a match you will be to her.

Love. You did very well, and I am obliged to you.

Lap. But, Sir, I have a small favour to ask you—I have a law-suit depending, which I am on the very brink of losing for want of a little money. [*He looks gravely.*]—And you could easily procure my success, if you had the least friendship for me. You can't imagine, Sir, the pleasure she takes in talking of you. [*He looks pleas'd.*]—Ah! how you will delight her, how your venerable mein will charin her! She will never be able to withstand you.—But indeed, Sir, this law-suit will be of a terrible consequence to me. [*He looks grave again.*]—I am ruin'd if I lose it, which a very small matter might prevent. Ah, Sir, had you but seen the raptures with which she has heard me talk of you. [*He resumes his gaiety.*] How pleasure sparkled in her eyes at the recital of your good qualities! In short, to discover a secret to you which I promis'd to conceal, I have work'd up her imagination till she is downright impatient of having the match concluded.

Love. Lappet, you have acted a very friendly part; and I own that I have all the obligations in the world to you.

Lap. I beg you would give me this little assistance, Sir. [*He looks serious.*] It will set me on my feet, and I shall be eternally obliged to you.

Love. Farewell, I'll go and finish my dispatches.

Lap. I assure you, Sir, you cou'd never assist me in a greater necessity.

Love. I must go give some orders about a particular affair. —

Lap. I would not importune you, Sir, if I was not forc'd by the last extremity.

Love. I expect the tailor about turning my coat. Don't you think this coat will look well enough turn'd, and with new buttons, for a wedding-suit?

Lap. For pity's sake, Sir, don't refuse me this small favour: I shall be undone, indeed, Sir. If it were but so small a matter as ten pounds, Sir.

Love. I think I hear the tailor's voice.

Lap. If it were but five pounds, Sir; but three pounds, Sir; nay, Sir, a single guinea would be of service for a day or two.

[*As he offers to go out on either side, she intercepts him.*]

Love. I must go; I can't stay. Hark there, somebody calls me. I'm very much oblig'd to you; indeed, I am very much oblig'd to you. [*Exit Love.*]

Lap. Go to the gallows, to the devil, like a covetous good-for-nothing villain, as you are. Ramlie is in the right; however, I shall not quit the affair: for though I get nothing out of him, I am sure of my reward from the other side.

Fools only to one party will confide,

Good politicians will both parties guide,

And, if one fails, they're fee'd on t'other side.

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ACT III. SCENE I.

SCENE *continues.*

HARRIET, FREDERICK, CLERMONT.

FREDERICK.

I Think, Sir, you have given my sister very substantial proof of your affection. I am sorry you could have had such a suspicion of me, as to imagine I could have been an enemy to one who has approv'd himself a gentleman and a lover.

Cler. If any thing, Sir, could add to my misfortunes, it would be to be thus oblig'd, without having any prospect of repaying the obligation.

Fred. Every word you speak is a farther conviction to me, that you are what you have declar'd yourself; for there is something in a generous education which it is impossible for persons, who want that happiness, to counterfeit: therefore, henceforth I beg you to believe me sincerely your friend.

Har. Come, come, pray a truce with your compliment; for I hear my father's cough coming this way.

SCENE II.

LOVEGOLD, FREDERICK, CLERMONT, HARRIET.

Love. So, so, this is just as I would have it. Let me tell you, children, this is a prudent young man, and you cannot converse too much with him. He will teach you, Sir, for all you hold your head so high, better sense than to borrow money at fifty *per cent.* And you, Madam, I dare say, he will infuse good things into you too, if you will but hearken to him.

Fred. While you live, Sir, we shall want no other instructor.

Love. Come hither, Harriet. You know to-night I have invited our friend and neighbour Mr Spindle. Now I intend to take this opportunity of saving the expence of another entertainment, by inviting Mariana and her mother; for I observe, that take what care one will there is always more victuals provided on these occasions than is ate; and an additional guest makes no additional expence.

Cler. Very true, Sir; besides, though they were to rise hungry, no one ever calls for more at another person's table.

Love. Right, honest Clermont; and to rise with an appetite is one of the wholesomest things in the world. Harriet, I would have you go immediately, and carry the invitation: you may walk thither, and they will bring you back in a coach.

Har. I shall obey you, Sir.

Love. Go, that's my good girl. And you, Sir, I desire you would behave yourself civilly at supper.

Fred. Why should you suspect me, Sir?

Love. I know, Sir, with what eyes such sparks as you look upon a mother-in-law; but if you hope for my forgiveness of your late exploit, I would advise you to behave to her in the most affectionate manner imaginable.

Fred. I cannot promise, Sir, to be overjoyed at her being my mother-in-law; but this I will promise you, I will be as civil to her as you could wish. I will behold her with as much affection as you can desire me; that is an article upon which you may be sure of a most punctual obedience.

Love. That, I think, is the least I can expect.

Fred. Sir, you shall have no reason to complain.

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SCENE III.

LOVEGOLD, CLERMONT, JAMES.

James. Did you send for me, Sir?

Love. Where have you been? for I have wanted you above an hour.

James. Whom, Sir, did you want? your coachman, or your cook? for I am both one and t'other.

Love. I want my cook, Sir.

James. I thought, indeed, it was not your coachman; for you have had no great occasion for him since your last pair of geldings were starv'd;—but your cook, Sir, shall wait on you in an instant.

[Puts off his coachman's great coat, and appears as a cook.]

Love. What's the meaning of this folly?

James. I am ready for your commands, Sir.

Love. I am engag'd this evening to give a supper.

James. A supper, Sir! I have not heard the word this half year. I have indeed now and then heard of such a thing as a dinner; but for a supper, I have not dress'd one so long, that I am afraid my hand is out.

Love. Leave off your saucy jesting, sirrah, and see that you provide me a good supper.

James. That may be done, Sir, with a good deal of money.

Love. What, is the devil in you? Always money! Can you say nothing else but money, money, money? All my servants, my children, my relations, can pronounce no other word than money.

Cler. I never heard so ridiculous an answer. Here's a miracle for you, indeed, to make a good supper with a good deal of money! is there any thing so easy? Is there any one who can't do it? Wou'd a man shew himself to be a good cook, he must make a good supper out of a little money.

James. I wish you wou'd be so good, Sir, as to shew us that art, and take my office of cook upon yourself.

Love. Peace, firrah, and tell me what we can have.

James. There's a gentleman, Sir, who can furnish you out a good supper with a little money.

Love. Answer me yourself.

James. Why, Sir, how many will there be at table?

Love. About eight or ten; but I will have a supper dress'd but for eight: for if there be enough for eight, there is enough for ten.

James. Suppose, Sir, you have at one end of the table a good handsome soup; at the other end a fine Westphalia ham and chickens; on one side a fillet of veal roasted; and on the other a turkey, or rather a bustard, which, I believe, may be bought for a guinea, or thereabouts.

Love. What, is the fellow providing an entertainment for my lord mayor, and the court of aldermen?

James. Then, Sir, for the second course a leash of pheasants, a leash of fat poulards, half a dozen partridges, one dozen of quails, two dozen of ortolans, three dozen.

Love. putting his hand before James's mouth.] Ah, villain! you are eating up all I am worth.

James. Then a ragout.

Love. stopping his mouth again.] Hold your extravagant tongue, firrah.

Cler. Have you a mind to burst them all? has my master invited people to cram 'em to death? or do you think his friends have a mind to eat him up at one supper? Such servants as you, Mr James, should be often reminded of that excellent saying of a very wise man, "We must eat to live, and not live to eat."

Love. Excellently well said, indeed; it is the finest sentence I ever heard in my life. "We must live to eat, and not eat to"—No, that is not it: how did you say?

Cler. That "we must eat to live, and not live to eat."

Love. Extremely fine: pray, write them out for me; for I'm resolv'd to have 'em done in letters of gold, or black and white rather, over my hall-chimney.

James. You have no need to do any more, Sir; people talk enough of you already.

Love. Pray, Sir, what do people say of me?

James. Ah, Sir, if I could but be assur'd that you would not be angry with me.

Love. Not at all; so far from it, you will very much oblige me; for I am always very glad to hear what the world says of me.

James. Well, Sir, then since you will have it, I will tell you freely, that they make a jest of you everywhere; nay, of your very servants upon your account. They make ten thousand stories of you; one says, that you have always a quarrel ready with your servants at quarter-day, or when they leave you, in order to find an excuse to give them nothing. Another says, that you were taken one night stealing your own oats from your own horses; for which your coachman very handsomely belabour'd your back. In a word, Sir, one can go nowhere, where you are not the bye-word; you are the laughing-stock of all the world; and you are never mention'd but by the names of covetous, scrapping, stingy—

Love. Impertinent, impudent rascal! Beat him for me, Clermont.

Cler. Are you not ashamed, Mr James, to give your master such language?

James. What's that to you, Sir?—I fancy this fellow's a coward; if he be, I will handle him. [*Aside.*]

Cler. It does not become a servant to use such language to his master.

James. Who taught you, Sir, what becomes? If you trouble your head with my business, I shall thresh your jacket for you. If I once take a stick in hand, I shall teach you to hold your tongue for the future, I believe. If you offer to say another word to me, I'll break your head for you.

[*Drives Cler. to the farther end of the stage.*]

Cler. How, rascal! break my head!

James. I did not say, I'd break your head.

[*Cler. drives him back again.*]

Cler. Do you know, sirrah, that I shall break yours for this impudence?

James. I hope not, Sir; I give you no offence, Sir.

Cler. That I shall shew you the difference between us.

James. Ha, ha, ha, Sir, I was but in jest.

Cler. Then I shall warn you to forbear these jests for the future. *[Kicks him off the stage.]*

James. Nay, Sir, can't you take a jest? Why, I was but in jest all the while.

Love. How happy am I in such a clerk!

Cler. You may leave the ordering of the supper to me, Sir; I will take care of that.

Love. Do so; see and provide something to cloy their stomachs: let there be two great dishes of soup-meagre, a good large suet-pudding, some dainty fat pork-pye or pasty, a fine small breast of mutton, not too fat; a salad, and a dish of artichokes; which will make plenty and variety enough.

Cler. I shall take a particular care, Sir, to provide every thing to your satisfaction.

Love. But be sure there be plenty of soup, be sure of that. This is a most excellent young fellow; but now will I go pay a visit to my money.

S C E N E VI.

The Street.

RAMILIE and LAPPET meeting.

Ram. Well, Madam, what success? Have I been a false prophet, and have you come at the old huncks's purse? or have I spoke like an oracle, and is he as close-fisted as usual?

Lap. Never was a person of my function so used. All my rhetoric availed nothing: while I was talking to him about the lady, he smil'd and was pleas'd; but the moment I mention'd money to him, his countenance chang'd, and he understood not one word that I said.

But now, Ramilie, what do you think this affair is that I am transacting?

Ram. Nay, Mrs Lappet, now you are putting too severe a task upon me. How is it possible, in the vast variety of affairs which you honour with taking into your hands, that I should be able to guess which is so happy to employ your immediate thoughts?

Lap. Let me tell you then, sweet Sir, that I am transacting an affair between your master's mistress and his father.

Ram. What affair, pr'ythee?

Lap. What should it be but the old one, matrimony. In short, your master and his father are rivals.

Ram. I am glad on't; and I wish the old gentleman success with all my heart.

Lap. How! are you your master's enemy?

Ram. No, Madam, I am so much his friend, that I had rather he should lose his mistress than his humble servant; which must be the case; for I am determin'd against a married family. I will never be servant to any man who is not his own master.

Lap. Why, truly, when one considers the case thoroughly, I must be of an opinion, that it would be more your master's interest to be this lady's son-in-law than her husband: for, in the first place, she has but little fortune; and if she was once married to his son, I dare swear the old gentleman would never forgive the disappointment of his love.

Ram. And is the old gentleman in love?

Lap. Oh, profoundly! delightfully! Oh that you had but seen him as I have! with his feet tottering, his eyes watering, his teeth chattering! his old trunk was shaken with a fit of love, just as if it had been a fit of an ague.

Ram. He will have more cold fits than hot, I believe.

Lap. Is it not more advantageous for him to have a mother-in-law that should open his father's heart to him, than a wife that should shut it against him? besides, it will be better for us all; for if the husband were as covetous as the devil, he could not stop the

hands of an extravagant wife. She will always have it in her power to reward them who keep her secrets; and when the husband is old enough to be the wife's grandfather, she has always secrets that are worth concealing, take my word for it: so, faith, I will e'en set about that in earnest which I have hitherto intended only as a jest.

Ram. But do you think you can prevail with her? Will she not be apt to think she loses that by the exchange which he cannot make her amends for?

Lap. Ah, Ramilie! the difficulty is not so great to persuade a woman to follow her interest. We generally have that more at heart than you men imagine; besides, we are extremely apt to listen to one another; and whether you would lead a woman to ruin, or preserve her from it, the surest way of doing either is by one of her own sex. We are generally decoy'd into the net by birds of our own feathers.

Ram. Well, if you do succeed in your undertaking, you will allow this, I hope, that I first put it into your head.

Lap. Yes, it is true you did mention it first; but I thought of it first, I am sure I must have thought of it. But I will not lose a moment's time: for, notwithstanding all I have said, young fellows are devils. Besides, this has a most plausible tongue, and, should he get access to Mariana, may do in a few minutes what I shall never be able to undo as long as I live. [*Ex. Lap.*]

Ram. There goes the glory of all chambermaids. The jade has art, but it is quite overshadow'd by her vanity. She will get the better of every one, but the person who will condescend to praise her; for, tho' she be a mercenary devil, she will swallow no bribe half so eagerly as flattery. The same pride which warms her fancy, serves to cool her appetites; and therefore, though she have neither virtue nor beauty, her vanity gives her both. And this is my mistress, with a pox to her! Pray, what am I in love with? but that is a question so few lovers can answer, that I shall content myself with thinking I am in love with *le je-ne-sais-quoi*,

SCENE V.

Lovegold's House.

LOVEGOLD, FREDERICK, HARRIET, Mrs WISELY,
and MARIANA.

Love. You see, Madam, what it is to marry extremely young. Here are a couple of tall branches for you, almost the age of man and woman; but ill weeds grow apace.

Mrs. Wise. When children come to their age, Mr Lovegold, they are no longer any trouble to their parents: what I have always dreaded, was to have married into a family where there were small children.

Love. Pray give me leave, young lady, I have been told you have no great aversion to spectacles; it is not that your charms do not sufficiently strike the naked eye, or that they want addition; but it is with glasses we look at the stars, and I'll maintain you are a star of beauty that is the finest, brightest, and most glorious of all stars.

Mar. Harriet, I shall certainly burst: Oh! nauseous filthy fellow.

Love. What does she say to you, Harriet?

Har. She says, Sir, if she were a star, you should be sure of her kindest influence.

Love. How can I return this great honour you do me?

Mar. Auh! what an animal! what a wretch!

Love. How vastly am I oblig'd to you for these kind sentiments!

Mar. I shall never be able to hold it out, unless you keep him at a great distance.

Love. *listening.*] I shall make them both keep their distance, Madam. Harkee, you Mr Spendall, why don't you come and make this lady some acknowledgment for the great honour she does your father?

Fred. My father has indeed, Madam, much reason to be vain of his choice. You will be doubtless a very great honour to our family. Notwithstanding which,

I cannot dissemble my real sentiments so far, as to counterfeit any joy I shall have in the name of son-in-law; nor can I help saying, that if it were in my power, I believe I should make no scruple in preventing the match.

Mar. I believe it, indeed; were they to ask the leave of their children, few parents would marry twice.

Love. Why, you ill-bred blockhead, is that the compliment you make your mother-in-law?

Fred. Well, Sir, since you will have me talk in another style—Suffer me, Madam, to put myself in the place of my father; and believe me, when I swear to you I never saw any one half so charming, that I can imagine no happiness equal to that of pleasing you; that to be called your husband, would be to my ears a title more blest, more glorious than that of the greatest of princes. The possession of you is the most valuable gift in the power of Fortune. That is the lovely mark to which all my ambition tends; there is nothing which I am not capable of undertaking to attain so great a blessing; all difficulties, when you are the prize in pursuit—

Love. Hold, hold, Sir: softly, if you please.

Fred. I am only saying a few civil things, Sir, for you to this lady.

Love. Your humble servant, Sir: I have a tongue to say civil things with myself. I have no need of such an interpreter as you are, sweet Sir.

Mar. If your father could not speak better for himself than his son can for him, I am afraid he would meet with little success.

Love. I don't ask you, Ladies, to drink any wine before supper, lest it should spoil your stomachs.

Fred. I have taken the liberty to order some sweetmeats, Sir, and tokay, in the next room; I hope the ladies will excuse what is wanting.

Mrs. Wife. There was no necessity of such a collation.

Fred. to Mar.] Did you ever see, Madam, so fine a brilliant as that on my father's finger?

Mar. It seems, indeed, to be a very fine one.

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Fred. You cannot judge of it, Madam, unless you were to see it nearer. If you will give me leave, Sir. [*Takes it from off his father's finger, and gives it to Mariana.*] There is no seeing a jewel while it is on the finger.

Mrs. Wife. Mar. It is really a prodigious fine one.

Fred. preventing Mar. who is going to return it.] No, Madam, it is already in the best hands. My father, Madam, intends it as a present to you; therefore I hope you will accept of it.

Love. Present! I!

Fred. Is it not, Sir, your request to this lady, that she would wear this bauble for your sake?

Love. to his son.] Is the devil in you?

Fred. He makes signs to me, that I would entreat you to accept it.

Mar. I shall not, upon my word.

Fred. He will not receive it again.

Love. I shall run stark-staring mad.

Mar. I must insist on returning it.

Fred. It would be cruel in you to refuse him; let me entreat you, Madam, not to shock my poor father to such a degree.

Mrs. Wife. It is ill-breeding, child, to refuse so often.

Love. Oh! that the devil would but fly away with this fellow!

Fred. See, Madam, what agonies he is in, lest you should return it.—It is not my fault, dear Sir; I do all I can to prevail with—but she is obstinate.—For Pity's sake, Madam, keep it.

Love. to his son.] Infernal villain!

Fred. My father will never forgive me, Madam, unless I succeed; on my knees I entreat you.

Love. The cut-throat!

Mrs. Wife. Daughter, I protest you make me ashamed of you; come, come, put up the ring, since Mr Love-gold is so uneasy about it.

Mar. Your commands, Madam, always determine me, and I shall refuse no longer.

Love. I shall be undone; I wish I was buried while I have one farthing left.

S C E N E VI.

To them JAMES.

James. Sir, there is a man at the door who desires to speak with you.

Love. Tell him I am busy—Bid him come another time, bid him leave his business with you—

James. Must he leave the money he has brought with me, Sir?

Love. No, no, stay—tell him I come this instant. I ask pardon, Ladies, I'll wait on you again immediately. *[Exit Love.]*

Fred. Will you please, Ladies, to walk into the next room, and taste the collation I was mentioning?

Mar. I have eat too much fruit already this afternoon.

Mrs. Wife. Really, Sir, this is an unnecessary trouble; but since the tokay is provided, I will taste one glass.

Har. I'll wait on you, Madam.

S C E N E VII.

FREDERICK, MARIANA.

Mar. That is a mighty pretty picture over the door, Harriet. Is it a family-piece, my dear? I think it has a great deal of you in it. Are you not generally thought very like it? Hey-day! where is my mamma and your sister gone?

Fred. They thought, Madam, we might have some business together, and so were willing to leave us alone.

Mar. Did they so? but as we happen to have no business together, we may as well follow them.

Fred. When a lover has no other obstacles to surmount, but those his mistress throws in his way, she is

in the right not to become too easy a conquest; but were you as kind as I could wish, my father would still prove a sufficient bar to our happiness: therefore it is a double cruelty in you.

Mar. Our happiness! how came your happiness and mine to depend so on one another, pray? when that of the mother and son-in-law are usually so very opposite.

Fred. This is keeping up the play behind the curtain. Your kindness to him comes from the same spring as your cruelty to me.

Mar. Modest enough! then, I suppose, you think both fictitious.

Fred. Faith, to be sincere, I do, without arrogance, I think; I have nothing in me so detestable, as should make you deaf to all I say, or blind to all I suffer: this I am certain, there is nothing in him so charming, as to captivate a woman of your sense in a moment.

Mar. You are mistaken, Sir; money, money, the most charming of all things; money, which will say more in one moment, than the most elegant lover can in years. Perhaps you will say a man is not young; I answer, he is rich. He is not genteel, handsome, witty, brave, good-humour'd; but he is rich, rich, rich, rich, rich—that one word contradicts every thing you can say against him: and if you were to praise a person for a whole hour, and end with, 'but he is poor,' you overthrow all you have said; for it has long been an establish'd maxim, That he who is rich, can have no vice, and he that is poor, can have no virtue.

Fred. These principles are foreign to the real sentiments of Mariana's heart. I vow, did you but know how ill a counterfeit you are, how awkwardly ill-nature sits upon you, you'd never wear it. There is not one so abandon'd, but that she can affect what is amiable better than you can what is odious. Nature has painted in you the complexion of virtue in such lively colours, that nothing but what is lovely can suit you, or appear your own.

S C E N E VIII.

MARIANA, FREDERICK, HARRIET.

Har. I left your mamma, Mariana, with Mr Clermont, who is shewing her some pictures in the gallery. Well, have you told him?

Mar. Told him what?

Har. Why, what you told me this afternoon; that you lov'd him.

Mar. I tell you I lov'd him!——Oh! barbarous falsehood!

Fred. Did you? could you say so? Oh! repeat it to my face, and make me bless'd to that degree.

Har. Repeat to him, can't you? how can you be so ill-natur'd to conceal any thing from another, which would make him happy to know?

Mar. The lie would choke me, were I to say so.

Har. Indeed, my dear, you have said you hated him so often, that you need not fear that. But, if she will not discover it to you herself, take my word for it, brother, she is your own without any possibility of losing. She is full as fond of you as you are of her. I hate this peevish, foolish coyness in women, who will suffer a worthy lover to languish and despair, when they need only put themselves to the pain of telling truth to make them easy.

Mar. Give me leave to tell you, Miss Harriet, this is a treatment I did not expect from you, especially in your own house, Madam. I did not imagine I was invited hither to be betray'd, and that you had enter'd into a plot with your brother against my reputation.

Har. We form a plot against your reputation! I wish you could see, my dear, how prettily the airs become you. Take my word for it, you would have no reason to be in love with your fancy.

Mar. I should indeed have no reason to be in love with my fancy, if it were fix'd where you have insinuated it to be placed.

Har. If you have any reason, Madam, to be asham'd

of your choice, it is from denying it. My brother is every way worthy of you, Madam; and give me leave to tell you, if I can prevent it, you shall not render him as ridiculous to the town, as you have some other of your admirers.

Fred. Dear Harriet, carry it no further; you will ruin me for ever with her.

Har. Away, you do not know the sex. Her vanity will make you play the fool 'till she despises you, and then contempt will destroy her affection for you.—It is a part she has often play'd.

Mar. I am oblig'd to you, however, Madam, for the lesson you have given me, how far I may depend on a woman's friendship. It will be my own fault, if ever I am deceiv'd hereafter.

Har. My friendship, Madam, naturally cools, when I discover its object less worthy than I imagin'd her.—I can never have any violent esteem for one, who would make herself unhappy, to make the person who dotes on her more so; the ridiculous custom of the world, is a poor excuse for such a behaviour. And, in my opinion, the coquette, who sacrifices the ease and reputation of as many as she is able to an ill-natur'd vanity, is a more odious, I am sure she is a more pernicious creature, than the wretch whom fondness betrays to make her lover happy at the expence of her own reputation.

S C E N E IX.

To them Mrs WISELY, CLERMONT.

Mrs Wise. Upon my word, Sir, you have a most excellent taste for pictures.

Mar. I can bear this no longer: if you had been base enough to have given up all friendship and honour, good-breeding should have restrain'd you from using me after this inhuman, cruel, barbarous manner.

Mrs Wise. Bless me! child, what's the matter?

Har. Let me intreat you, Mariana, not to expose yourself; you have nothing to complain of on his side; and therefore pray let the whole be a secret.

Mar. A secret! no, Madam. The whole world shall know how I have been treated. I thank Heaven, I have it in my power to be reveng'd on you; and if I am not reveng'd on you——

Fred. See, sister, was I not in the right? Did I not tell you, you would ruin me? and now you have done it.

Mar. Courage! all will go well yet. You must not be frighten'd at a few storms. These are only blasts that carry a lover to his harbour.

S C E N E X.

To them LOVEGOLD.

Love. I ask your pardon; I have dispatch'd my business with all possible haste.

Mrs Wife. I did not expect, Mr Lovegold, when we were invited hither, that your children intended to affront us.

Love. Has any one affronted you, Madam?

Mrs Wife. Your children, Sir, have us'd my poor girl so ill, that they have brought tears into her eyes. I can assure you, we are not us'd to be treated in this manner. My daughter is of as good a family——

Love. Out of my sight, audacious, vile wretches, and let me never see you again.

Fred. Sir, I——

Love. I won't hear a word, and I wish I may never hear you more. Was ever such impudence, to dare, after what I told you——

Har. Come, brother; perhaps I may give you some comfort.

Fred. I fear you have destroy'd it for ever.

S C E N E XI.

LOVEGOLD, *Mrs WISELY*, *MARIANA*, *CLERMONT*.

Love. How shall I make you amends for the rudeness you have suffer'd? Poor, pretty creature! had they

stolen my purse, I would almost as soon have pardon'd them.

Mrs Wife. The age is come to a fine pass indeed, if children are to controul the wills of their parents. If I would have consented to a second match, I would have been glad to have seen a child of mine oppose it.

Love. Let us be married immediately, my dear; and if after that they ever dare offend you, they shall stay no longer under my roof.

Mrs Wife. Lookye, Mariana, I know your consent will appear a little sudden, and not altogether conform to those nice rules of decorum, of which I have been all my life so strict an observer; but this is so prudent a match, that the world will be apt to give you a dispensation. When women seem too forward to run away with idle young fellows, the world is, as it ought to be, very severe on them: but when they only consult their interest in their consent, tho' it be never so quickly given; we say, La! who suspected it? it was mighty privately carried on.

Mar. I resign myself intirely over to your will, Madam, and am at your disposal.

Mrs Wife. Mr Lovegold, my daughter is a little shy on this occasion: you know your courtship has not been of any long date; but she has consider'd your great merit, and I believe I may venture to give you her consent.

Love. And shall I? hey! I begin to find myself the happiest man upon earth. Od! Madam, you shall be a grandmother within these ten months. I am a very young fellow.

Mar. If you were five years younger, I should utterly detest you.

Love. The very creature she was describ'd to be. No one, sure, ever so luckily found a mass of treasure as I have. My pretty sweet, if you will walk a few minutes in the garden I will wait on you; I must give some necessary orders to my clerk.

Mrs Wife. We shall expect you with impatience.

S C E N E XII.

LOVEGOLD, CLERMONT.

Love. Clermont, come hither: you see the disorder my house is like to be in this evening. I must trust every thing to your care; see that matters be manag'd with as small expence as possible. My extravagant son has sent for fruit, sweetmeats, and tokay. Take care what is not ate or drank be return'd to the trades-people. If you can save a bottle of the wine, let that be sent back too, and put up what is left, if part of a bottle, in a pint: that I will keep for my own drinking when I am sick. Be sure that the servants of my guests be not ask'd to come farther than the hall, for fear some of mine should ask them to eat. I trust every thing to you.

Cler. I shall take all the care possible, Sir. But there is one thing in this entertainment of yours which gives me inexpressible pain.

Love. What is that, pr'ythee?

Cler. That is, the cause of it. Give me leave, Sir, to be free on this occasion. I am sorry a man of your years and prudence should be prevail'd on to so indiscreet an action, as I fear this marriage will be called.

Love. I know she has not quite so great a fortune as I might expect.

Cler. Has she any fortune, Sir?

Love. Oh! yes, yes, I have been very well assured that her mother is in very good circumstances; and you know she is her only daughter. Besides, she has several qualities which will save a fortune: and a penny fav'd is a penny got. Since I find I have great occasion for a wife, I might have searched all over this town, and not have got one cheaper.

Cler. Sure you are in a dream, Sir; she save a fortune!

Love. In the article of a table, at least two hundred pounds a year.

Cler. Sure, Sir, you do not know—

Love. In clothes, two hundred more—

Cler. There is not, Sir, in the whole town—

Love. In jewels, one hundred; play, five hundred: these have been all prov'd to me; besides all that her mother is worth. In short, I have made a very prudent choice.

Cler. Do but hear me, Sir.

Love. Take a particular care of the family, my good boy. Pray, let there be nothing wasted.

S C E N E XIII.

CLERMONT alone.

How vainly do we spend our breath, while passion shuts the ears of those we talk to. I thought it impossible for any thing to have surmounted his avarice; but I find there is one little passion which reigns triumphant in every mind it creeps into; and whether a man be covetous, proud, or cowardly, it is in the power of a woman to make him liberal, humble, and brave. Sure this young lady will not let her fury carry her into the arms of a wretch she despises; but as she is a coquette, there is no answering for any of her actions. I will hasten to acquaint Frederick with what I have heard. Poor man! how little satisfaction he finds in his mistress, compared to what I meet in Harriet! Love to him is misery, to me perfect happiness. Women are always one or the other; they are never indifferent.

Whoever takes for better and for worse,

Meets with the greatest blessing, or the greatest curse.

ACT IV. SCENE I.

A Hall in LOVEGOLD'S house.

FREDERICK, RAMILLIE.

FREDERICK.

HOW! Lappet my enemy! and can she attempt to forward Mariana's marriage with my father?

Ram. Sir, upon my honour it is true. She told it me in the highest confidence; a trust, Sir, which nothing but the inviolable friendship I have for you, could have prevail'd with me to have broken.

Fred. Sir, I am your most humble servant; I am infinitely oblig'd to your friendship.

Ram. Oh! Sir; but really I did withstand pretty considerable offers: for, would you think it, Sir? the jade had the impudence to attempt to engage me too in the affair. I believe, Sir, you would have been pleas'd to have heard the answer I gave her: Madam, says I, do you think, if I had no more honour, I should have no greater regard to my interest? It is my interest, Madam, says I, to be honest: for my master is a man of that generosity, that liberality, that bounty, that I am sure he will never suffer any servant of his to be a loser by being true to him. No, no, says I; let him alone for rewarding a servant, when he is but once assur'd of his fidelity.

Fred. No demands now, Ramillie: I shall find a time to reward you.

Ram. That was what I told her, Sir. Do you think, says I, this old rascal, (I ask your pardon, Sir), that this hunk, my master's father, will live for ever? And then, says I, do you think my master will not remember his old friends?

Fred. Well, but dear Sir, let us have no more of your rhetoric.—Go, and fetch Lappet hither. I'll try if I can't bring her over.

Act IV.

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Ram. Bring her over! a fig for her, Sir. I have a plot worth fifty of yours. I'll blow her up with your father. I'll make him believe just the contrary of every word she has told him.

Fred. Can you do that?

Ram. Never fear it, Sir; I'll warrant my lies keep even pace with hers. But, Sir, I have another plot; I don't question but before you sleep I shall put you in possession of some thousands of your father's money.

Fred. He has done all in his power to provoke me to it; but I am afraid that will be carrying the jest too far.

Ram. Sir, I will undertake to make it out, that robbing him is a downright meritorious act. Besides, Sir, if you have any qualms of conscience, you may return it him again. Your having possession of it will bring him to any terms.

Fred. Well, well. I believe there is little danger of thy stealing any thing from him. So about the first affair. It is that only which causes my present pain.

Ram. Fear nothing, Sir, whilst Ramilie is your friend.

S C E N E II.

FREDERICK, CLERMONT.

Fred. If impudence can give a title to success, I am sure thou hast a good one.

Cler. Oh! Frederick, I have been looking you all over the house. I have news for you which will give me pain to discover, though it is necessary you should know it. In short, Mariana has determined to marry your father this evening.

Fred. How! oh, Clermont, is it possible? Cursed be the politics of my sister, she is the innocent occasion of this. And can Mariana, from a pique to her, throw herself away? Dear Clermont, give me some advice, think on some method by which I may prevent, at least defer this match; for that moment that gives her

to my father, will strike a thousand daggers in my heart.

Cler. Would I could advise you : but here comes one who is more likely to invent some means for your deliverance.

Fred. Ha ! Lappet !

S C E N E II.

LAPPET, FREDERICK, CLERMONT.

Lap. Heyday ! Mr Frederick, you stand with your arms across, and look as melancholy as if there was a funeral going on in the house, instead of a wedding.

Fred. This wedding, Madam, will prove the occasion of my funeral ; I am oblig'd to you for being instrumental to it.

Lap. Why, truly, if you consider the case rightly, I think you are. It will be much more to your interest to——

Fred. Mistress, undo immediately what you have done ; prevent this match which you have forward-ed, or by all the devils which inhabit that heart of yours——

Lap. For Heaven's sake, Sir ! You do not intend to kill me ?

Fred. What could drive your villainy to attempt to rob me of the woman I dote on more than life ? What could urge thee, when I trusted thee with my passion, when I have paid the most extravagant usury for money to bribe thee to be my friend, what could sway thee to betray me ?

Lap. As I hope to be sav'd, Sir, whatever I have done was intended for your service.

Fred. It is in vain to deny it ; I know thou hast us'd thy utmost art to persuade my father into this match.

Lap. If I did, Sir, it was all with a view towards your interest ; if I have done any thing to prevent your having her, it was because I thought you would do better without her.

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Fred. Wouldst thou, to save my life, tear out my heart? And dost thou, like an impudent inquisitor, while thou art destroying me, assert it is for my own sake?

Lap. Be but appeas'd, Sir, and let me recover out of this terrible fright you have put me into, and I will engage to make you easy yet.

Cler. Dear Frederick, adjourn your anger for a while at least; I am sure Mrs Lapper is not your enemy in heart; and whatever she has done, if it has not been for your sake, this I dare confidently affirm, it has been for her own. And I have so good an opinion of her, that the moment you shew her it will be more her interest to serve you, than to oppose you, you may be sure of her friendship.

Fred. But has she not already carried it beyond retrieval?

Lap. Alas, Sir! I never did any thing yet so effectually, but that I have been capable of undoing it; nor have I ever said any thing so positively, but that I have been able as positively to unsay it again. As for truth, I have neglected it so long, that I often forgot which side of the question it is of. Besides, I look on it to be so very insignificant towards success, that I am indifferent whether it is for me or against me.

Fred. Let me entreat you, dear Madam, to lose no time in informing us of your many excellent qualities; but consider how very precious our time is, since the marriage is intended this very evening.

Lap. That cannot be.

Cler. My own ears were witnesses to her consent.

Lap. That indeed may be—but for the marriage, it cannot be, nor it shall not be.

Fred. How! how will you prevent it?

Lap. By an infallible rule I have. But, Sir, Mr Clermont was mentioning a certain little word called Interest, just now. I should not repeat it to you, Sir, but that really one goes about a thing with so much a better will, and one has so much better luck in it too, when one has got some little matter by it.

Fred. Here, take all the money I have in my pocket, and on my marriage with Mariana thou shalt have fifty more.

Lap. That is enough, Sir; if they were half married already, I would unmarry them again. I am impatient till I am about it.—Oh! there is nothing like gold to quicken a woman's capacity.

S C E N E IV.

FREDERICK, CLERMONT.

Fred. Dost thou think I may place any confidence in what this woman says?

Cler. Faith! I think so. I have told you how dextrously she manag'd my affairs. I have seen such proofs of her capacity, that I am much easier on your account than I was.

Fred. My own heart is something lighter too. Oh Clermont! how dearly do we buy all the joys which we receive from women!

Cler. A coquette's lover generally pays very severely, indeed. His game is sure to lead him a long chase; and if he catches her at last, she is hardly worth carrying home.—You will excuse me.

Fred. It does not affect me; for what appears a coquette in Mariana, is rather the effects of sprightliness and youth, than any fixed habit of mind; she has good-sense and good-nature at the bottom.

Cler. If she has good-nature, it is at the bottom indeed; for I think she has never discover'd any to you.

Fred. Women of her beauty and merit have such a variety of admirers, that they are shocked to think of giving up all the rest by fixing on one. Besides, so many pretty gentlemen are continually attending them, and whispering so many soft things in their ears, who think all their services well repaid by a curtsy, or a smile, that they are startled, and think a lover a most unreasonable creature, who can imagine he merits their whole person.

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Cler. They are of all people my aversion ; they are a sort of spaniels, who, though they have no chance of running down the hare themselves, often spoil the chase. I have known one of these fellows pursue half the fine women in town, without any other design than of enjoying them all in the arms of a strumpet. It is pleasant enough to see them watching the eyes of a woman of quality half an hour, to get an opportunity of making a bow to her.

Fred. Which she often returns with a smile, or some more extraordinary mark of affection ; from a charitable design of giving pain to her real admirer, who, though he can't be jealous of the animal, is concern'd to see her condescend to take notice of him.

S C E N E V.

HARRIET, FREDERICK, CLERMONT.

Har. I suppose, brother, you have heard of my good father's oeconomy, that he has resolved to join two entertainments into one—and prevent giving an extraordinary wedding-supper.

Fred. Yes, I have heard it—and I hope have taken measures to prevent it.

Har. Why, did you believe it then ?

Fred. I think I had no longer room to doubt.

Har. I would not believe it, if I were to see them in bed together.

Fred. Heaven forbid it !

Har. So say I too. Heaven forbid I should have such a mother-in-law ; but I think if she were wedded into any other family, you would have no reason to lament the loss of so constant a mistress.

Fred. Dear Harriet, indulge my weakness.

Har. I will indulge your weakness with all my heart—but the men ought not ; for they are such lovers as you who spoil the women.—Come, if you will bring Mr Clermont into my apartment, I'll give you a dish of tea, and you shall have some sal volatile in it,

though you have no real cause for any depression of your spirit; for I dare swear your mistress is very safe. And I am sure, if she were to be lost in the manner you apprehend, she would be the best loss you ever had in your life.

Cler. Oh Frederick! if your mistress were but equal to your sister, you might be well called the happiest of mankind.

S C E N E VI.

MARIANA, LAPPET.

Lap. Ha, ha, ha! and so you have persuaded the old lady, that you really intend to have him?

Mar. I tell you, I do really intend to have him.

Lap. Have him! ha, ha, ha! For what do you intend to have him?

Mar. Have I not told you already that I will marry him?

Lap. Indeed, you will not.

Mar. How! Mrs Impertinence, has your mistress told you so? and did she send you hither to persuade me against the match?

Lap. What should you marry him for? As for his riches, you might as well think of going hungry to a fine entertainment, where you are sure of not being suffer'd to eat. The very income of your own fortune will be more than he will allow you. Adieu fine clothes, operas, plays, assemblies; adieu dear quadrille. — And to what have you sacrificed all these? — not to a husband — for whatever you may make of him, you will never make a husband of him, I'm sure.

Mar. This is a liberty, Madam, I shall not allow you; if you intend to stay in this house, you must leave off these pretty airs you have lately given yourself. — Remember you are a servant here, and not the mistress, as you have been suffer'd to affect.

Lap. You may lay aside your airs too, good Madam,

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if you come to that; for I shall not desire to stay in this house when you are the mistress of it.

Mar. It will be prudent in you, not to put on your usual insolence to me; for if you do, your master shall punish you for it.

Lap. I have one comfort, he will not be able to punish me half so much as he will you. The worst he can do to me is to turn me out of the house—but you he can keep in it. Wife to an old fellow! laugh!

Mar. If Miss Harriet sent you on this errand, you may return, and tell her, her wit is shallower than I imagin'd it;—and since she has no more experience, I believe I shall send my daughter-in-law to school again. [Exit.

Lap. Hum! you will have a schoolmaster at home: I begin to doubt, whether this sweet-temper'd creature will not marry in spite at last. I have one project more to prevent her, and that I will about instantly.

S C E N E VII.

The Garden.

LOVEGOLD, *Mrs WISELY.*

Love. I cannot be easy. I must settle something upon her.

Mrs Wise. Believe me, Mr Lovegold, it is unnecessary;—when you die you will leave your wife very well provided for.

Love. Indeed, I have known several law-suits happen on these accounts; and sometimes the whole has been thrown away in disputing to which party it belong'd. I shall not sleep in my grave, while a set of villainous lawyers are dividing the little money I have left among them.

Mrs Wise. I know this old fool is fond enough now to come on any terms; but it is ill trusting him: violent passions can never last long at his years. [Aside.

Love. What are you considering?

Mrs Wife. Mr Lovegold, I am sure, knows the world too well to have the worse opinion of any woman from her prudence; therefore I must tell you, this delay of the match does not at all please me. It seems to argue your inclination abated, and so it is better to let the treaty end here. My daughter has a very good offer now, which were she to refuse on your account, she would make a very ridiculous figure in the world after you had left her.

Love. Alas! Madam, I love her better than any thing almost upon the face of the earth; this delay is to secure her a good jointure: I am not worth the money the world says; I am not indeed.

Mrs Wife. Well, Sir, then there can be no harm, for the satisfaction of both her mind and mine, in your signing a small contract, which can be prepar'd immediately.

Love. What signifies signing, Madam?

Mrs Wife. I see, Sir, you don't care for it. So there is no harm done; and really this other is so very advantageous an offer, that I don't know whether I shall not be blam'd for refusing him on any account.

Love. Nay, but be not in haste; what would you have me sign?

Mrs Wife. Only to perform your promise of marriage.

Love. Well, well, let your lawyer draw it up then, and mine shall look it over.

Mrs Wife. I believe my lawyer is in the house; I'll go to him and get it done instantly; and then we will give this gentleman a final answer. I assure you he is a very advantageous offer. [Exit.]

Love. As I intend to marry this girl, there can be no harm in signing the contract; her lawyer draws it up, so I shall be at no expence; for I can get mine to look it over for nothing. I should have done very wisely indeed, to have entitl'd her to a third of my fortune, whereas I will not make her jointure above a tenth. I protest it is with some difficulty that I have prevail'd with myself to put off the match: I am more in love, I find, than I suspected,

SCENE VIII.

LAPPET, LOVEGOLD.

Lap. Oh! unhappy! miserable creature that I am! what shall I do? whither shall I go?

Love. What's the matter, Lappet?

Lap. To have been innocently assisting in betraying so good a man! so good a master! so good a friend!

Love. Lappet, I say.

Lap. I shall never forgive myself, I shall never outlive it, I shall never eat, drink, sleep——

[Runs against him.]

Love. One would think you were walking in your sleep now. What can be the meaning of this?

Lap. Oh!—Sir!—you are undone, Sir, and I am undone.

Love. How! what! has any one robb'd me? have I lost any thing?

Lap. No, Sir; but you have got something.

Love. What? what?

Lap. A wife, Sir.

Love. No, I have not yet—but why——

Lap. How, Sir, are you not married?

Love. No.

Lap. That is the happiest word I ever heard come out of your mouth.

Love. I have, for some particular reasons, put off the match for a few days.

Lap. Yes, Sir; and for some particular reasons, you shall put off the match for a few years.

Love. What do you say?

Lap. Oh! Sir, this affair has almost determin'd me never to engage in matrimonial matters again. I have been finely deceiv'd in this lady. I told you, Sir, she had an estate in a certain country; but I find it is all a cheat, Sir; the devil of an estate has she.

Love. How! not any estate at all! How can she live then?

Lap. Nay, Sir, Heaven knows how half the people in this town live.

Love. However, it is an excellent good quality in a woman to be able to live without an estate. She that can make something out of nothing, will make a little go a great way. I am sorry she has no fortune; but considering all her saving qualities, Lappet—

Lap. All an imposition, Sir; she is the most extravagant wretch upon earth.

Love. How! how! extravagant!

Lap. I tell you, Sir, she is downright extravagance itself.

Love. Can it be possible, after what you have told me?

Lap. Alas! Sir; that was only a cloak thrown over her real inclinations.

Love. How was it possible for you to be so deceiv'd in her?

Lap. Alas! Sir, she would have deceiv'd any one upon earth, even you yourself: for, Sir, during a whole fortnight since you have been in love with her, she has made it her whole business to conceal her extravagance, and appear thrifty.

Love. That is a good sign, tho'; Lappet, let me tell you, that is a good sign; right habits, as well as wrong, are got by affecting them. And she who could be thrifty a whole fortnight, gives lively hopes that she may be brought to be so as long as she lives.

Lap. She loves play to distraction: it is the only visible way in the world she has of a living.

Love. She must win then, Lappet: and play, when people play the best of the game, is no such very bad thing. Besides, as she plays only to support herself, when she can be supported without it, she may leave it off.

Lap. To support her extravagance in dress particularly; why, don't you see, Sir, she is dress'd out to-day like a princess?

Love. It may be an effect of prudence in a young woman to dress, in order to get a husband. And as that is apparently her motive, when she is married that mo-

five ceases: and, to say the truth, she is in discourse
a very prudent young woman.

Lap. Think of her extravagance,

Love. A woman of the greatest modesty.

Lap. And extravagance.

Love. She has really a very fine set of teeth.

Lap. She will have all the teeth out of your head.

Love. I never saw finer eyes.

Lap. She will eat you out of house and home.

Love. Charming hair.

Lap. She will ruin you.

Love. Sweet kissing lips, swelling breasts, and the
finest shape that ever was embraced.

[*Catching Lappet in his arms.*]

Lap. O, Sir! I am not the lady.—Was ever such
an old goat!—Well, Sir, I see you are determined on
the match, and so I desire you would pay me my wages.
I cannot bear to see the ruin of a family in which I
have lived so long, that I have contracted as great a
friendship for it as if it was my own: I can't bear to
see waste, riot, and extravagance; to see all the wealth
a poor, honest, industrious gentleman has been raising
all his lifetime, squander'd away in a year or two in
feasts, balls, music, cards, clothes, jewels.—It would
break my heart to see my poor old master eat out by a
set of singers, idlers, milliners, mantua-makers, mer-
cers, toymen, jewellers, fops, cheats, rakes.—To see
his guineas fly about like dust; all his ready money
paid away in one morning to one tradesman; his whole
stock in the funds spent in one half year; all his land
swallowed down in another; all his gold, nay, the very
plate which he has had in his family time out of mind,
which has descended from father to son ever since the
flood, to see even that disposed of. What will they
have next, I wonder, when they have had all that he
is worth in the world, and left the poor old man with-
out any thing to furnish his old age with the necessaries
of life?—Will they be contented then, or will they
tear out his bowels, and eat them too! [*Both burst into
tears.*] The laws are cruel, to put it in the power of

a wife to ruin her husband in this manner. — And will any one tell me that such a woman as this is handsome? — What are a pair of shining eyes, when they must be bought with the loss of all one's shining gold?

Love. Oh! my poor old gold!

Lap. Perhaps she has a fine set of teeth.

Love. My poor plate, that I have boarded with so much care!

Lap. Or I'll grant she may have a most beautiful shape.

Love. My dear land and tenements!

Lap. What are the roses on her cheeks, or lilies in her neck?

Love. My poor India bonds, bearing at least three and a half per cent!

Lap. A fine excuse, indeed, when a man is ruined by his wife; to tell us he has married a beauty.

S C E N E IX.

LAWYER, LOVEGOLD, LAPPET.

Law. Sir, the contract is ready; my client has sent for the counsel on the other side, and he is now below examining it.

Love. Get you out of my doors, you villain, you and your client too; I'll contract you, with a pox.

Law. Heyday! sure you are *non compos mentis*!

Love. No, firrah, I had like to have been *non compos mentis*; but I have had the good luck to escape it. Go and tell your client I have discover'd her: bid her take her advantageous offer; for I shall sign no contracts.

Law. This is the strangest thing I have met with in my whole course of practice.

Love. I am very much oblig'd to you, Lappet; indeed I am very much obliged to you.

Lap. I am fore, Sir, I have a very great satisfaction in serving you: and I hope you will consider of that little affair I mentioned to you to-day about my lawsuit.

Love. I am very much obliged to you.

Lap. I hope, Sir, you won't suffer me to be ruined when I have preserved you from it.

Love. Hey! [*As if deaf.*]

Lap. You know, Sir, that in Westminster-hall money and right are always on the same side.

Love. Ay, so they are; very true, so they are; and therefore no one can take too much care of his money.

Lap. The smallest matter of money, Sir, would do thee an infinite service.

Love. Hey! What?

Lap. A small matter of money, Sir, would do me a great kindness.

Love. Oh! I have a very great kindness for you; indeed I have a very great kindness for you.

Lap. Pox take your kindness! I'm only losing time: there's nothing to be got out of him. So I'll go to Frederick, and see what the report of my success will do there! Ah! would I were married to thee myself!

Love. What a prodigious escape have I had! I cannot look at the precipice without being giddy.

S C E N E X.

RAMLIE, LOVEGOLD.

Love. Who is that? Oh, is it you, firrah? How dare you enter within these walls?

Ram. Truly, Sir, I can scarcely reconcile it to myself; I think, after what has happened, you have no great title to my friendship. But I don't know how it is, Sir, there is something or other about you which strangely engages my affections, and which, together with the friendship I have for your son, won't let me suffer you to be imposed upon; and to prevent that, Sir, is the whole and sole occasion of my coming within your doors. Did not a certain lady, Sir, called Mrs Lappet, depart from you just now?

Love. What if she did, firrah?

Ram. Has she not, Sir, been talking to you about a young lady, whose name is Mariana?

Love. Well, and what then?

Ram. Why, then, Sir, every single syllable she has told you has been neither more nor less than a most confounded lie; as is, indeed, every word she says; for I don't believe, upon a modest calculation, she has told six truths since she has been in the house. She is made up of lies: her father was an attorney, and her mother was chambermaid to a maid of honour. The first word she spoke was a lie, and so will be the last. I know she has pretended a great affection for you, that's one lie; and every thing she has said of Mariana is another.

Love. How! how! are you sure of this?

Ram. Why, Sir, she and I laid the plot together; that one time, indeed, I myself was forced to deviate a little from the truth; but it was with a good design: the jade pretended to me that it was out of friendship to my master; that it was because she thought such a match would not be at all to his interest; but, alas! Sir, I know her friendship begins and ends at home; and that she has friendship for no person living but herself. Why, Sir, do but look at Mariana, Sir, and see whether you can think her such a sort of woman as she has described her to you.

Love. Indeed she has appeared to me always in a different light. I do believe what you say. This jade has been bribed by my children to impose upon me. I forgive thee all that thou hast done, for this one service. I will go deny all that I said to the lawyer, and put an end to every thing this moment. I knew it was impossible she could be such a sort of a woman. [Exit.]

Ram. And I will go find out my master, make him the happiest of mankind, squeeze his purse, and then get drunk for the honour of all party-coloured politicians.

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SCENE XI.

The Hall.

FREDERICK, LAPPET.

Fred. Excellent Lappet! I shall never think I have sufficiently rewarded you for what you have done.

Lap. I have only done half the business yet. I have, I believe, effectually broke off the match with your father. Now, Sir, I shall make up the matter between you and her.

Fred. Do but that, dear girl, and I'll coin myself into guineas.

Lap. Keep yourself for your Lady, Sir; she will take all that sort of coin, I warrant her: as for me, I shall be much more easily contented.

Fred. But what hopes canst thou have? for I, alas! see none.

Lap. Oh, Sir! it is more easy to make half a dozen matches, than to break one; and, to say the truth, it is an office I myself like better. There is something, methinks, so pretty in bringing young people together that are fond of one another. I protest, Sir, you will be a mighty handsome couple. How fond will you be of a little girl the exact picture of her mother! and how fond will she be of a boy to put her in mind of his father!

Fred. Death! you jade, you have fir'd my imagination.

Lap. But methinks I want to have the hurricane begin hugely; I am surpris'd they are not all together by the ears already!

SCENE XII.

RAMILIE, FREDERICK, LAPPET.

Ram. Oh! Madam! I little expected to have found you and my master together, after what has happened; I did not think you had the assurance—

Fred. Peace, Ramilie, all is well, and Lappet is the best friend I have in the world.

Ram. Yes, Sir, all is well indeed; no thanks to her: happy is the master that has a good servant; a good servant is certainly the greatest treasure in this world; I have done your business for you, Sir; I have frustrated all she has been doing, denied all she has been telling him: in short, Sir, I observed her Ladyship in a long conference with the old gentleman, mightily to your interest, as you may imagine. No sooner was she gone than I steps in, and made the old gentleman believe every single syllable she had told him to be a most confounded lie; and away he is gone, fully determin'd to put an end to the affair.

Lap. And sign the contract; so now, Sir, you are ruined without rérieve.

Fred. Death and damnation! fool! villain!

Ram. Heyday! what is the meaning of this? have I done any more than you commanded me?

Fred. Nothing but my curs'd stars cou'd have contriv'd so damn'd an accident.

Ram. You cannot blame me, Sir, whatever has happened.

Fred. I don't blame you, Sir; nor myself, nor any one: fortune has mark'd me out for misery. But I will be no longer idle; since I am to be ruin'd, I will meet my destruction.

S C E N E XIII.

LAPPET, RAMILIE.

[*They stand some time silent, looking at each other.*]

Lap. I give you joy, Sir, of the success of your negotiation; you have approved yourself a most able person, truly; and I dare swear, when your skill is once known, will not want employment.

Ram. Do not triumph, good Mrs Lappet; a politician may make a blunder; I am sure no one can avoid it that is employ'd with you; for you change sides so often, that 'tis impossible to tell at any time which side you are on.

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Lap. And pray, firrah, what was the occasion of your betraying me to your master, for he has told me all?

Ram. Conscience, conscience, Mrs Lappet, the great guide of all my actions; I could not find in my heart to let him lose his mistress.

Lap. Your master is very much obliged to you, indeed, to lose your own, in order to preserve his: for henceforth I forbid all your addresses, I disown all obligations, I revoke all promises; henceforth I would advise you never to open your lips to me, for if you do, it will be in vain: I shall be deaf to all your little, false, mean, treacherous, base insinuations. I would have you know, Sir, a woman injured as I am, never can or ought to forgive. Never see my face again. *[Exit.]*

Ram. Huh! now would some lovers think themselves very unhappy; but I, who have had experience in the sex, am never frightened at the frowns of a mistress, nor ravish'd with her smiles; they both naturally succeed one another; and a woman, generally, is as sure to perform what she threatens, as she is what she promises. But now I'll to my lurking place. I'm sure this old rogue has money hid in the garden; if I can but discover it, I shall handsomely quit all scores with the old gentleman, and make my master a sufficient return for the loss of his mistress.

S C E N E XIV.

Another Apartment.

FREDERICK, Mrs WISELY, MARIANA.

Fred. No, Madam, I have no words to upbraid you with, nor shall I attempt it.

Mrs Wisely. I think, Sir, a respect to your father should keep you now within the rules of decency; as for my daughter, after what has happened, I think she cannot expect it on any other account.

Mar. Dear Mamma, don't be serious, when, I dare say, Mr Frederick is in jest.

Fred. This exceeds all you have done; to insult the person you have made miserable, is more cruel than having made him so.

Mar. Come, come, you may not be so miserable as you expect. I know the word mother-in-law has a terrible sound; but perhaps, I may make a better than you imagine. Believe me, you will see a change in this house which will not be disagreeable to a man of Mr. Frederick's gay temper.

Fred. All changes to me are henceforth equal. When fortune robbed me of you, she made her utmost effort; I now despise all in her power.

Mrs. Wife. I must insist, Sir, on your behaving in a different manner to my daughter. The world is apt to be censorious. Oh, Heavens! I shudder at the apprehensions of having a reflection cast on my family, which has hitherto past unblemished.

Fred. I shall take care, Madam, to shun any possibility of giving you such a fear; for from this night I never will behold those dear, those fatal eyes again.

Mar. Nay, that I am sure will cast a reflection on me. What a person will the world think me to be, when you could not live with me?

Fred. Live with you! Oh, Mariana! those words bring back a thousand tender ideas to my mind. Oh! had that been my blest fortune!

Mrs. Wife. Let me beg, Sir, you would keep a greater distance. The young fellows of this age are so rampant, that even degrees of kindred can't restrain them.

Fred. There are yet no such degrees between us. — Oh, Mariana! while it is in your power, while the irrevocable wax remains unstamp'd, consider, and do not seal my ruin.

Mrs. Wife. Come with me, daughter; you shall not stay a moment with him—a rude fellow! [*Ex. Wife. Mar.*]

S C E N E XV.

RAMILIE, FREDERICK.

Ram. Follow me, Sir, follow me this instant.

Fred. What's the matter?

Ram. Follow me, Sir; we are in the right box: the business is done.

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Fred. What done?

Ram. I have it under my arm, Sir—here it is!

Fred. What? what?

Ram. Your father's soul, Sir, his money.—Follow me, Sir, this moment, before we are overtaken.

Fred. Ha! this may preserve me yet.

S C E N E XVI.

LOVE GOLD in the utmost distraction.

Thieves! thieves! assassination! murder! I am undone! all my money is gone! Who is the thief? where is the villain? where shall I find him? Give me my money again, villain. [*Catching himself by the arm.*] I am distracted! I know not where I am, nor what I am, nor what I do. Oh! my money, my money! Ha! what say you? Alack-a-day! here is no one. The villain must have watch'd his time carefully; he must have done it while I was signing that damn'd contract. I will go to a justice, and have all my house put to their oaths, my servants, my children, my mistress, and myself too; all the people in the house, and in the street, and in the town; I will have them all executed; I will hang all the world; and if I don't find my money, I will hang myself afterwards.

ACT V. SCENE I

The Hall.

Several SERVANTS.

JAMES.

THERE will be rare doings now; Madam's an excellent woman, faith! things won't go as they have done; she has order'd something like a supper; here will be victuals enough for the whole town.

Tho. She's a sweet humour'd lady, I can tell you that. I have had a very good place on't with her.

You will have no more use for locks and keys in this house now.

James. This is the luckiest day I ever saw. As soon as supper is over, I will get drunk to her good health, I am resolv'd; and that's more than ever I could have done before.

Tho. You shan't want liquor. For here are ten hogshheads of strong beer coming in.

James. Bless her heart, good lady! I wish she had a better bridegroom.

Tho. Ah! never mind that, he has a good purse; and for other things, let her alone, master James.

Wheed. Thomas, you must go to Mr Mixture's the wine-merchant, and order him to send in twelve dozen of his best Champagne, twelve dozen of Burgundy, and twelve dozen of Hermitage. And you must call at the wax-chandler's, and bid him send in a chest of candles; and at Mr Lambert's the confectioner in Pall Mall, and order the finest desert he can furnish: and you, Will, must go to Mr Grey's, the horse-jockey, and order him to buy my lady three of the finest geldings for her coach, to morrow morning; and here you must take this roll, and invite all the people in it to supper; then you must go to the play-house in Drury-Lane, and engage all the music, for my lady intends to have a ball.

James. Oh brave Mrs Wheedle! here are fine times!

Wheed. My Lady desires that supper may be kept back as much as possible; and if you can think of any thing to add to it, she desires you would.

James. She is the best of ladies.

Wheed. So you will say when you know her better: she has thought of nothing ever since matters have been made up between her and your master, but how to lay out as much money as she could; we shall all have rare places.

James. I thought to have given warning to-morrow morning, but I believe I shall not be in haste now.

Wheed. See what it is to have a woman at the head

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of a house. But here she comes. Go you into the kitchen, and see that all things be in the nicest order.

Fames. I am ready to leap out of my skin for joy.

S C E N E II.

MARIANA, WHEEDLE, URHOLSTERER, Mrs. WISELY.

Mar. Wheedle, have you dispatched the servants according to my orders?

Wheed. Yes, Madam.

Mar. You will take care, Mr Furnish, and let me have those two beds with the ut most expedition.

Uphol. I shall take a particular care, Madam. I shall put them both in hand to-morrow morning; I shall put off some work, Madam, on that account.

Mar. That tapestry in the dining-room does not at all please me.

Uphol. Your Ladyship is very much in the right, Madam; it is quite out of fashion; no one hangs a room now with tapestry.

Mar. Oh! I have the greatest fondness for tapestry in the world! you must positively get me some of a newer pattern.

Uphol. Truly, Madam, as you said, tapestry is one of the prettiest sorts of furniture for a room that I know of. I believe I can shew you some that will please you.

Mrs. Wise. I protest, child, I can't see any reason for this alteration.

Mar. Dear Mamma, let me have my will. There is not any one thing in the whole house that I shall be able to leave in it, every thing has so much of antiquity about it; and I cannot endure the sight of any thing that is not perfectly modern.

Uphol. Your Ladyship is in the right, Madam; there is no possibility of being in the fashion without new-furnishing a house, at least once in twenty years; and

indeed, to be at the very top of the fashion, you will have need of almost continual alterations.

Mrs Wife. That is an extravagance I would never submit to. I have no notion of destroying one's goods before they are half worn out, by following the ridiculous whims of two or three people of quality.

Uphol. Ha, ha! Madam, I believe her Ladyship is of a different opinion.—I have many a set of goods entirely whole, that I would be very loth to put into your hands.

S C E N E III.

To them, MERCER, JEWELLER.

Mar. Oh, Mr Sattin! have you brought those gold stuffs I ordered you?

Merc. Yes, Madam, I have brought your Ladyship some of the finest patterns that ever were made.

Mar. Well, Mr Sparkle, have you the necklace and ear-rings with you?

Jewel. Yes, Madam; and I defy any jeweler in town to shew you their equals; they are, I think, the finest water I ever saw; they are finer than the duchess of Glitter's, which have been so much admired; I have brought you a solitaire too, Madam; my lady Raffle bought the fellow of it yesterday.

Mar. Sure it has a flaw in it, Sir.

Jewel. Has it, Madam? then there never was a brilliant without one: I am sure, Madam, I bought it for a good stone, and if it be not a good stone, you shall have it for nothing.

S C E N E IV.

LOVEGOLD, MARIANA, Mrs WISELY, JEWELLER, MERCER, UPHOLSTERER.

Love. It's lost, it's gone, it's irrecoverable! I shall never see it more!

Mar. And what will be the lowest price of the necklace and ear-rings?

Jewel. If you were my sister, Madam, I could not bate you one farthing of three thousand guineas.

Love. What do you say of three thousand guineas, villain? Have you my three thousand guineas?

Mrs. Wife. Bless me, Mr Lovegold! what's the matter?

Love. I am undone! I am ruined! my money is stolen! my dear three thousand guineas, that I received but yesterday, are taken away from the place I had put them in, and I shall never see them again!

Mar. Don't let them make you uneasy, you may possibly recover them; or if you should not, the loss is but a trifle.

Love. How! a trifle! Do you call three thousand guineas a trifle?

Mrs. Wife. She sees you so disturbed, that she is willing to make as light of your loss as possible, in order to comfort you.

Love. To comfort me! Can she comfort me by calling three thousand guineas a trifle! But tell me, what were you saying of them? Have you seen them?

Jewel. Really, Sir, I do not understand you; I was telling the lady the price of a necklace and a pair of ear-rings, which were as cheap at three thousand guineas as—

Love. How! What, what!

Mar. I can't think them very cheap. However, I am resolved to have them; so let him have the money, Sir, if you please.

Love. I am in a dream.

Mar. You will be paid immediately, Sir. Well, Mr Sattin, and pray what is the highest priced gold stuff you have brought?

Merc. Madam, I have one of twelve pounds a yard.

Mar. It must be pretty at that price. Let me have a gown and petticoat cut off.

Love. You shall cut off my head first. What are you doing? are you mad?

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Mar. I am only preparing a proper dress to appear in as your wife.

Love. Sirrah, offer to open any of your pickpocket trinkets here, and I'll make an example of you.

Mar. Mr Lovegold, give me leave to tell you, this is a behaviour I don't understand. You give me a fine pattern before marriage of the usage I am to expect after it.

Love. Here are fine patterns of what I am to expect after it!

Mar. I assure you, Sir, I shall insist on all the privileges of an English wife. I shall not be taught to dress by my husband. I am myself the best judge of what you can afford; and if I do stretch your purse a little, it is for your own honour, Sir. The world will know it is your wife that makes such a figure.

Love. Can you bear to hear this, Madam?

Mrs Wife. I should not countenance my daughter in any extravagance, Sir; but the honour of my family, as well as yours, is concerned in her appearing handsomely. Let me tell you, Mr Lovegold, the whole world is very sensible of your fondness for money; I think it a very great blessing to you, that you have met with a woman of a different temper, one who will preserve your reputation in the world whether you will or no. Not that I would insinuate to you, that my daughter will ever run you into unnecessary expences; so far from it, that if you will but generously make her a present of five thousand pounds to fit herself out at first in clothes and jewels, I dare swear you will not have any other demand on those accounts—I don't know when.

Mar. No, unless a birth-night suit or two, I shall scarce want any thing more this twelvemonth.

Love. I am undone, plundered, murdered! however, there is one comfort; I am not married yet.

Mar. And free to chuse whether you will marry at all, or no.

Mrs Wife. The consequence, you know, will be no more than a ten thousand pound, which is all the forfeiture of the breach of contract.

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Love. But, Madam, I have one way yet. I have not bound my heirs and executors; and so if I hang myself, I am off the bargain.—In the mean while I'll try if I cannot rid my house of this nest of thieves.—Get out of my doors, you cutpurfes.

Jewel. Pay me for my jewels, Sir, or return 'em me.

Love. Give him his baubles; give him them.

Mar. I shall not, I assure you. You need be under no apprehension, Sir; you see Mr Lovegold is a little disordered at present; but if you will come to-morrow, you shall have your money.

Jewel. I'll depend on your Ladyship, Madam.

Love. Who the devil are you? What have you to do here?

Uphol. I am an upholsterer, Sir, and am come to new-furnish your house.

Love. Out of my doors this instant, or I will dis-furnish your head for you; I'll beat out your brains.

Mrs Wife. Sure, Sir, you are mad.

Love. I was, when I sign'd the contract. Oh! that I had never learnt to write my name!

S C E N E V.

CHARLES BUBBLEBOY, LOVEGOLD, MARIANA,

Mrs WISELY.

Char. Your most obedient servant, Madam.

Love. Who are you, Sir? What do you want here?

Char. Sir, my name is Charles Bubbleboy.

Love. What's your business?

Char. Sir, I was ordered to bring some snuff-boxes and rings. Will you please, Sir, to look at that snuff-box; there is but one person in England, Sir, can work in this manner. If he was but as diligent as he is able, he would get an immense estate, Sir; if he had an hundred thousand hands, I could keep them all employed. I have brought you a pair of the new invented snuffers too, Madam. Be pleas'd to look at them; they are my own invention; the nicest lady in the world may make use of them.

Love. Who the devil sent for you, Sir?

Mar. I sent for him, Sir.

Char. Yes, Sir, I was told it was a lady sent for me. Will you please, Madam, to look at the snuff-boxes or rings first?

Love. Will you please to go to the devil, Sir, first, or shall I send you?

Char. Sir?

Love. Get you out of my house this instant, or I'll break your snuff-boxes, and your bones too.

Char. Sir, I was sent for, or I should not have come. Charles Bubbleboy does not want custom! Madam, your most obedient servant.

SCENE VI.

MARIANA, Mrs WISELY, LOVEGOLD, WHEEDLE.

Mar. I suppose, Sir, you expect to be finely spoken of abroad for this; you will get an excellent character in the world by this behaviour.

Mrs Wise. Is this your gratitude to a woman who has refused so much better offers on your account?

Love. Oh! would she had taken them. Give me up my contract, and I will gladly resign all right and title whatsoever.

Mrs Wise. It is too late now, the gentlemen have had their answers; a good offer, once refused, is not to be had again.

Wheed. Madam, the tailor whom your Ladyship sent for is come.

Mar. Bid him come in. This is an instance of the regard I have for you; I have sent for one of the best tailors in town to make you a new suit of clothes, that you may appear like a gentleman; for as it is for your honour that I should be well dress'd, so is it for mine that you should. Come, Madam, we will go in and give further orders concerning the entertainment.

[*Ex. Mar. Wise. Wheed.*]

[*Love.*]

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SCENE VII.

LOVEGOLD, LIST.

Love. Oh, Lappet, Lappet! the time thou hast prophesied of is come to pass.

List. I am your honour's most humble servant. My name is List. I presume I am the person you sent for—the laceman will be here immediately. Will your honour be pleased to be taken measure of first, or look over the patterns; if you please we will take measure first. I do not know, Sir, who was so kind as to recommend you to me, but I believe I shall give you entire satisfaction: I may defy any tailor in England to understand the fashion better than myself; the thing is impossible, Sir. I always visit France twice a-year; and though I say it, that should not say it—Stand up-right, if you please, Sir—

Love. I'll take measure of your back, firrah—I'll teach such pickpockets as you are to come here—Out of my door, you villain.

List. Heyday! Sir, did you send for me for this, Sir?—I shall bring you in a bill without any clothes.

SCENE VIII.

LOVEGOLD, JAMES, PORTER.

Love. Where are you going?—What have you there?

James. Some fine wine, Sir, that my lady sent for to Mr Mixture's.—But, Sir, it will be impossible for me to get supper ready by twelve, as it is ordered, unless I have more assistance. I want half a dozen kitchens too. The very wild-fowl that my lady has sent for will take up a dozen spits.

Love. Oh! oh! it is in vain to oppose it; her extravagance is like a violent fire, that is no sooner stopped in one place, than it breaks out in another.—
[Drums beat without.] Ha! what is the meaning of this? Is my house besieged? Would they would set it on fire, and burn all in it!

SCENE X.

LAPPET, LOVEGOLD.

Lap. Where is my poor master? Oh, Sir! I cannot express the affliction I am in to see you devoured in this manner. How cou'd you, Sir, when I told you what a woman she was? how cou'd you undo yourself with your eyes open?

Love. Poor Lappet! had I taken thy advice, I had been happy.

Lap. And I too, Sir; for, alack-a-day, I am as miserable as you are; I feel every thing for you, Sir; indeed I shall break my heart upon your account.

Love. I shall be much obliged to you if you do, Lappet.

Lap. How could a man of your sense, Sir, marry in so precipitate a manner?

Love. I am not married; I am not married.

Lap. Not married!

Love. No, no, no.

Lap. All's safe yet. No man is quite undone till he is married.

Love. I am, I am undone. Oh, Lappet! I cannot tell it thee. I have given her a bond, a bond, a bond of ten thousand pound to marry her.

Lap. You shall forfeit it.

Love. Forfeit what? my life, and soul, and blood, and heart?

Lap. You shall forfeit it——

Love. I'll be buried alive sooner: no, I am determined I'll marry her first, and hang myself afterwards to save my money.

Lap. I see, Sir, you are undone; and if you should hang yourself, I could not blame you.

Love. Could I but save one thousand by it, I would hang myself with all my soul. Shall I live to die not worth a groat.

Lap. Oh! my poor master! my poor master!

[Crying.]

Love. Why did I not die a year ago! what a deal had I saved by dying a year ago! [*A noise without.*] Oh! oh! dear Lappet, see what it is! I shall be undone in an hour—Oh!

S C E N E XI.

LOVEGOLD, CLERMONT *richly dress'd.*

Love. What is here?—Some of the people who are to eat me up?

Cler. Don't you know me, Sir?

Love. Know you! Ha! What is the meaning of this?—Oh! it is plain, it is too plain; my money has paid for all this finery. Ah! base wretch, could I have suspected you of such an action, of lurking in my house to use me in such a manner?

Cler. Sir, I come to confess the fact to you; and if you will but give me leave to reason with you, you will not find yourself so much injured as you imagine.

Love. Not injured! when you have stolen away my blood!

Cler. Your blood is not fallen into bad hands; I am a gentleman, Sir.

Love. Here's impudence! a fellow robs me, and tells me he is a gentleman.—Tell me who tempted you to it?

Cler. Ah, Sir! need I say—*Love.*

Love. Love!

Cler. Yes, love, Sir.

Love. Very pretty love, indeed; the love of my guineas.

Cler. Ah, Sir! think not so. Do but grant me the free possession of what I have, and, by Heaven, I'll never ask you more.

Love. Oh, most unequalled impudence! was ever so modest a request!

Cler. All your efforts to separate us will be vain; we have sworn never to forsake each other; and nothing but death can part us.

Love. I don't question, Sir, the very great affection on your side ; but I believe I shall find methods to recover—

Cler. By Heavens! I'll die in defending my right; and if that were the case, think not, when I am gone, you ever could possess what you have robb'd me of.

Love. Ha! that's true; he may find ways to prevent the restoring it. Well, well, let me delight my eyes at least; let me see my treasure, and perhaps I may give it to you; perhaps I may.

Cler. Then I am blest! Well may you say treasure; for to possess that treasure is to be rich indeed.

Love. Yes, truly, I think three thousand pounds may be well called a treasure—Go, go, fetch it hither; perhaps I may give it you—fetch it hither.

Cler. To shew you, Sir, the confidence I place in you, I will fetch hither all that I love and adore.

[Exit.

Love. Sure never was so impudent a fellow; to confess his robbery before my face, and to desire to keep what he has stolen, as if he had a right to it.

S C E N E XII.

LOVEGOLD, LAPPET.

Love. Oh, Lappet! what's the matter?

Lap. Oh, Sir! I am scarce able to tell you. It is spread about the town that you are married, and your wife's creditors are coming in whole flocks. There is one single debt for five thousand pounds, which an attorney is without to demand.

Love. Oh! oh! oh! let them cut my throat.

Lap. Think what an escape you have had; think, if you had married her—

Love. I am as bad as married to her.

Lap. It is impossible, Sir; nothing can be so bad: what, you are to pay her ten thousand pounds!—Well—and ten thousand pounds are a sum—they are a sum, I own it—they are a sum; but what is such a sum, compared with such a wife? Had you

married her, in one week you would have been in a prison, Sir—

Love. If I am, I can keep my money; they can't take that from me.

Lap. Why, Sir, you will lose twice the value of your contract before you know how to turn yourself; and if you have no value for liberty, yet consider, Sir, such is the great goodness of our laws, that a prison is one of the dearest places you can live in.

Love. Ten thousand pounds!—No—I'll be hang'd, I'll be hang'd.

Lap. Suppose, Sir, it were possible (not that I believe it is) but suppose it were possible to make her abate a little; suppose one cou'd bring her to eight thousand—

Love. Eight thousand devils take her—

Lap. But, dear Sir, consider; nay, consider immediately; for every minute you lose, you lose a sum—Let me beg you, intreat you, my dear good master, let me prevail on you not to be ruin'd. Be resolute, Sir; consider, every guinea you give saves you a score.

Love. Well, if she will consent to, to, to eight hundred. But try, do, try if you can make her 'bate any thing of that—If you can—you shall have a twentieth part of what she 'bates for yourself.

Lap. Why, Sir, if I could get you off at eight thousand, you ought to leap out of your skin for joy.

Love. Would I were out of my skin—

Lap. You will have more reason to wish so when you are in the hands of bailiffs for your wife's debts—

Love. Why was I begotten!—Why was I born!—Why was I brought up!—Why was not I knock'd o' th' head before I knew the value of money!

Lap. Knocking without.] So, so, more duns, I suppose.—Go but into the kitchen, Sir, or the hall, and it will have a better effect on you than all I can say.

Love. What have I brought myself to! What shall I do! Part with eight thousand pounds? Misery, destruction, beggary, prisons! But then on the other side are wife, ruin, chains, slavery, torment! I shall run distracted either way. [Ex. *Love.*

Lap. Ah! would we could once prove you so, you old-covetous good-for-nothing.

S C E N E XII.

MARIANA, LAPPET.

Mar. Well, what success?

Lap. It is impossible to tell; he is just gone into the Kitchen, where, if he is not frighten'd into our design, I shall begin to despair. They say fear will make a coward brave; but nothing can make him generous: the very fear of losing all he is worth, will scarce bring him to part with a penny.

Mar. And have you acquainted neither Frederick nor Harriet with my intentions?

Lap. Neither, I assure you. Ah, Madam, had I not been able to have kept a secret, I had never brought about those affairs that I have. Were I not secret, I had have mercy upon many a virtuous woman's reputation in this town.

Mar. And don't you think I have kept my real intentions very secret?

Lap. From every one but me, I believe you have. I assure you I knew them long before you sent for me this afternoon to discover them to me.

Mar. But could you bring him to no terms, no proposals? Did he make no offer?

Lap. It must be done all at once, and while you are by.

Mar. So you think he must see me, to give any thing to be rid of me.

Lap. Hush, hush! I hear him coming again.

S C E N E XIV.

LOVEGOLD, LAPPET, MARIANA.

Love. I am undone ! I am undone ! I am eat up ! I am devour'd ! I have an army of cooks in my house.

Lap. Dear Madam, consider ; I know eight thousand pounds are a trifle. I know they are nothing ; my master can very well afford them ; they will make no hole in his purse : and if you should stand out, you will get more.

Love. *putting his hand before Lappet's mouth.*] You lie, you lie, you lie, you lie, you lie. She never could get more, never should get more : it is more than I am worth ; it is an immense sum ; and I will be starv'd, drown'd, shot, hang'd, burnt, before I part with a penny of it.

Lap. For Heaven's sake, Sir, you will ruin all.—Madam, let me beg you, intreat you, to 'bate those two thousand pounds. Suppose a law-suit should be the consequence, I know my master would be cast, I know it would cost him an immense sum of money, and that he would pay the charges of both in the end ; but you might be kept out of it a long time. Eight thousand pounds now, are better than ten five years hence.

Mar. No, the satisfaction of my revenge on a man who basely departs from his word, will make me amends, for the delay ; and whatever I suffer, as long as I know his ruin will be the consequence, I shall be easy.

Love. Oh, bloody-minded wretch !

Lap. Why, Sir, since she insists on it, what does it signify ? You know you are in her power, and it will be only throwing away more money to be compell'd to it at last : get rid of her at once ; what are two thousand pounds ? Why, Sir, the Court of Chancery will eat it up for a breakfast. It has been given for a mistress, and will you not give it to be rid of a wife ?

SCENE XV.

THOMAS, JAMES, MARIANA, LOVEGOLD, LAPPET.

[LOVEGOLD and LAPPET talk apart.]

Tho. Madam, the music are come which your ladyship order'd; and most of the company will be here immediately.

James. Where will your Ladyship be pleas'd the servants shall eat? for there is no room in the house that will be large enough to entertain 'em.

Mar. Then beat down the partition, and turn two rooms into one.

James. There is no service in the house proper for the desert, Madam.

Mar. Send immediately to the great China-shop in the Strand for the finest that is there.

Love. How! and will you swear a robbery against her? that she robbed me of what I shall give her?

Lap. Depend on it, Sir.

Love. I'll break open a bureau, to make it look the more likely.

Lap. Do so, Sir; but lose no time; give it her this moment. Madam, my master has consented, and if you have the contract, he is ready to pay the money. Be sure to break open the bureau, Sir.

Mar. Here is the contract.

Love. I'll fetch the money. It is all I am worth in the world.

SCENE XVI.

MARIANA, LAPPET.

Mar. Sure, he will never be brought to it yet.

Lap. I warrant him. But you are to pay dearer for it than you imagine; for I am to swear a robbery against you. What will you give me, Madam, to buy off my evidence?

Mar. And is it possible that the old rogue would consent to such a villainy!

Lap. Ay, Madam; for half that sum he would hang half the town. But truly, I can never be made amends for all the pains I have taken on your account. Were I to receive a single guinea a lie for every one I have told this day, it would make me a pretty tolerable fortune. Ah! Madam, what a pity it is that a woman of my excellent talents should be confined to so low a sphere of life as I am! Had I been born a great lady, what a deal of good should I have done in the world!

S C E N E XVII.

MARIANA, LAPPET, LOVEGOLD.

Love. Here, here they are—all in bank-notes—all the money I am worth in the world.—(I have sent for a constable; she must not go out of sight before we have taken her into custody.) [*Aside to Lappet.*

Lap. to Lovegold.] You have done very wisely.

Mar. There, Sir, is your contract. And now, Sir, I have nothing to do but to make myself as easy as I can in my loss.

S C E N E XVIII.

LOVEGOLD, FREDERICK, CLERMONT, MARIANA, LAPPET, HARRIET.

Love. Where is that you promis'd me? where is my treasure?

Cler. Here, Sir, is all the treasure I am worth. A treasure which the whole world's worth should not purchase.

Love. Give me the money, Sir, give me the money; I say, give me the money you stole from me.

Cler. I understand you not.

Love. Did you not confess you robb'd me, of my treasure?

Cler. This, Sir, is the inestimable treasure I meant! Your daughter, Sir, has this day blest me by making me her husband.

Love. How! Oh, wicked vile wretch! to run away thus with a pitiful mean fellow, thy father's clerk.

Cler. Think not your family disgrac'd, Sir. I am at least your equal born; and though my fortune be not so large as for my dearest Harriet's sake I wish, still it is such as will put it out of your power to make us miserable.

Love. Oh! my money, my money, my money!

Fred. If this lady does not make you amends for the loss of your money, resign over all pretensions in her to me, and I will engage to get it restor'd to you.

Love. How, sirrah! are you a confederate? Have you help'd to rob me?

Fred. Softly, Sir, or you shall never see your guineas again.

Love. I resign her over to you entirely, and may you both starve together. So, go fetch my gold.—

Mar. You are easily prevail'd upon, I see, to resign a right which you have not. But were I to resign over myself, it would hardly be the man's fortune to starve; whose wife brought him ten thousand pounds.

Love. Bear witness, she has confessed she has the money; and I shall prove she stole it from me. She has broke open my bureau; Lappet is my evidence.

Lap. I hope I shall have all your pardons, and particularly yours, Madam, whom I have most injured.

Love. A fig for her pardon; you are doing a right action.

Lap. Then, if there was any robbery, you must have robb'd yourself. This lady can only be a receiver of stolen goods; for I saw you give her the money with your own hands.

Love. How! I! You! What! what!

Lap. And I must own it, with shame I must own it—that the money you gave her in exchange for the contract, I promis'd to swear she had stole from you.

Cler. Is it possible Mr Lovegold could be capable of such an action as this?

Love. I am undone, undone, undone!

Fred. No, Sir, your three thousand guineas are safe yet? depend upon it within an hour you shall find them in the same place they were first deposited. I thought to have purchas'd a reprieve with them; but I find my fortune has of itself bestow'd that on me.

Love. Give 'em me, give 'em me, this instant—but shew the ten thousand, where are they?

Mar. Where they ought to be, in the hands of one who I think deserves them. [*Gives them to Frederick.*] You see, Sir, I had no design to the prejudice of your family. Nay, I have prov'd the best friend you ever had; for, I presume, you are now thoroughly cur'd of your longing for a young wife.

Love. Sirrah, give me my notes, give me my notes.

Fred. You must excuse me, Sir; I can part with nothing I receive from this lady.

Love. Then I will go to law with that lady, and you, and all of you: for I will have them again, if law, or justice, or injustice, will give them me.

Cler. Be pacified, Sir; I think the lady has acted nobly, in giving that back again into your family which she might have carried out of it.

Love. My family be hang'd; if I am robb'd, I don't care who robs me. I would as soon hang my son as another—and I will hang him, if he does not restore me all I have lost: for I would not give half the sum to save the whole world—I will go and employ all the lawyers in town; for I will have my money again, or never sleep more.

Fred. I am resolv'd we will get the better of him now. But oh! Mariana! your generosity is much greater in bestowing this sum than my happiness in receiving it. I am an unconscionable beggar, and shall never be satisfied while you have any thing to bestow.

Mar. Do you hear him?—
Har. Yes, and begin to approve him—for your late behaviour has convinc'd me.

Mar. Dear girl, no more; you have frighten'd me already so much to-day, that rather than venture a second lecture, I would do whatever you wish'd.—
 So, Sir, if I do bestow all on you, here is the lady you are to thank for it.

Har. Well, this I will say, when you do a good-natur'd thing, you have the prettiest way of doing it. And now, Mariana, I am ready to ask your pardon for all I said to-day.

Mar. Dear Harriet, no apologies: all you said I deserv'd.

S C E N E *The Last.*

LAPPET, RAMILIE, FREDERICK, MARIANA, CLERMONT, HARRIET.

Lap. Treaties are going on, on both sides, while you and I seem forgotten.

Ram. Why, have we not done them all the service we can? What farther have they to do with us?—
 Sir, there are some people in masquerading habits without.

Mar. Some I sent for to assist in my design on your father: I think we will give them admittance, though we have done without them.

All. Oh! by all means.

Fred. Mrs Lappet, be assur'd I have a just sense of your favours, and both you and Ramilie shall find my gratitude.

[*Dance here.*]

Fred. Dear Clermont, be satisfied I shall make no peace with the old gentleman, in which you shall not be included. I hope my sister will prove a fortune equal to your great deserts.

Cler. While I am enabled to support her in affluence equal to her desires, I shall desire no more. From what I have seen lately, I think riches are rather to be fear'd than wish'd; at least, I am sure avarice, which too often attends wealth, is a greater evil than any that is found in poverty. Misery is generally the end of all vice; but it is the very mark at which avarice seems to aim: the miser endeavours to be wretched.

He hoards eternal cares within his purse;
And what he wishes most, proves most his curse.



EPILOGUE.

By COLLY CIBBER, Esq;

Spoken by Mrs RAFTOR.

OUR Author's sure bewitch'd! The senseless rogue
Insists no good play needs an epilogue.
Suppose that true, said I, what's that to this?
Is yours a good one?—No, but Moliere's is.
He cry'd, and zounds! no epilogue was tack'd to his.
Besides, your modern epilogues, said he,
Are but ragouts of smut and ribaldry;
Where the false jests are dwindled to so few,
There's scarce one double entendre left that's new.
Nor wou'd I in that lovely circle raise
One blush to gain a thousand coxcombs' praise.
Then for the thread-bare joke of cit and wit,
Whose foreknown rhyme is echo'd from the pit,
'Till of their laugh the galleries are bit.
Then to reproach the critics with ill-nature,
And charge their malice to his stinging satire:
And thence appealing to the nicer boxes,
Tho' talking stuff might dash the Drury doxies.
If these, he cry'd, the choice ingredients be
For epilogues, they shall have none for me.
Lord, Sir, says I, the gallery will so bawl;
Let 'em, he cry'd, a bad one's worse than none at all.
Madam, these things than you I'm more expert in,
Nor do I see no epilogue much hurt in.
Zounds! when the play is ended—drop the curtain.

END OF VOLUME THIRD.

E P I L O G U E

By COLLY CLEVER, M.P.

Spoken by Mrs. H. A. T. O. R.

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There is no good play made in this way.

2000-2001

It wants a good one. — No, but Molotov's is.

It is out of the question that your presence on 1 August has been decided.

1891

2. *voluntas* non *potest* *esse* *causa* *motus*

...the following table are included in the

THESE

[Faint, illegible handwritten text]

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...the

...the most ...

and the other side of the mountain.

When it appeared the center will return

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1. The first part of the document is a letter from the President of the United States to the Congress, dated January 1, 1861. It is a copy of the original letter, and is signed by Abraham Lincoln.

1. The first part of the paper is devoted to the study of the properties of the function $f(x)$ defined by the equation



1970-1971

1. The first step is to identify the problem or question that needs to be answered.

END OF VOLUME 11

1990

END OF VOLUME THIRD.